Disadvantaged and Orphaned Jewish Children in Palestine, 1881-1939

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Eugene Sheppard, Advisor

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by

Karen Spira

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ABSTRACT

Disadvantaged and Orphaned Jewish Children in Palestine, 1881-1939

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

By Karen Spira

The development of child welfare systems in the *Yishuv* (lit. settlement; communities of Jewish residents of Palestine) is an overlooked, yet foundational part of the story of the Jews in Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel. The thought, flexibility, and responsiveness put into the rescue, care, education, and training of thousands of Jewish children before the rise of Nazi Germany—and then tens of thousands of children thereafter—was the basis of not only those child welfare systems but also of social services in the future State of Israel. While much of Jewish and Zionist leadership focused on diplomatic, political, and military wins, social workers, teachers, and nurses were raising the children of the newly declared Jewish national home under British colonial rule in Palestine and thus the Jewish national home itself. This dissertation reveals how the health, well-being, and success of Palestine's Jewish children reflected the health and success of the Jewish national home in Mandatory Palestine and increasing aspirations for statehood, wherein the survival of each Jewish child represented the literal and symbolic survival of the Jewish people. To save one child became synecdochally integral to saving a whole nation. Moreover, the child-saving project took on such importance through its integration and entanglement with the existential crises of the day: the Zionist movement to settle Jews in the Holy Land; the efforts to rescue Jewish war orphans from antisemitic violence plaguing Europe and the Russian Empire; the flight of Jewish children and families from North

African and Western Asian communities from poverty and oppression; and the influx of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children who lost their father or both parents to the effects of war—violence, poverty, and disease—in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By seeking to understand the practical expressions of ideals, values, and norms in the social constructions of the child, childhood, and orphanhood, this study reveals the distinctive ways in which the case of Jewish Palestine bucked the trends of the time and challenged fundamental, accepted views of the "best" way to raise children under institutional care.

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Introduction

The development of child welfare systems in the *Yishuv* (lit. settlement; communities of Jewish residents of Palestine) is an overlooked, yet foundational part of the story of the Jews in Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel. The thought, flexibility, and responsiveness put into the rescue, care, education, and training of thousands of Jewish children before the rise of Nazi Germany—and then tens of thousands of children thereafter—was the basis of not only those child welfare systems but also of social services in the future State of Israel. While much of Jewish and Zionist leadership focused on diplomatic, political, and military wins, social workers, teachers, and nurses were raising the children of the newly declared Jewish national home under British colonial rule in Palestine and thus the Jewish national home itself. This dissertation reveals how the health, well-being, and success of Palestine's Jewish children reflected the health and success of the Jewish national home in Mandatory Palestine and increasing aspirations for statehood, wherein the survival of each Jewish child represented the literal and symbolic survival of the Jewish people. To save one child became synecdochally integral to saving a whole nation. Moreover, the child-saving project took on such importance through its integration and entanglement with the existential crises of the day: the Zionist movement to settle Jews in the Holy Land; the efforts to rescue Jewish war orphans from antisemitic violence plaguing Europe and the Russian Empire; the flight of Jewish children and families from North African and Western Asian communities from poverty and oppression; and the influx of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children who lost their father or both parents to the effects of war—violence, poverty, and disease—in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

This dissertation demonstrates how the "orphan problem" took center stage as an alarming social crisis in the Yishuv as the numbers of native-born and immigrant disadvantaged

and orphaned children grew beyond what the *kehillah* (lit. "congregation" but refers generally to a local Jewish community) could support. Since Jews organized themselves independently within the Ottoman Empire, but were also subject to Ottoman governance, debates rose as to whom was responsible for the care of the destitute children populating the streets. This dissertation shows how disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children became targets of global philanthropy, objects within debates over social and religious responsibility, and test cases for evolving modern, Western views of child welfare. By seeking to understand the practical expressions of ideals, values, and norms in the social constructions of the child, childhood, and orphanhood, this study reveals the distinctive ways in which the case of Jewish Palestine bucked the trends of the time and challenged fundamental, accepted views of the "best" way to raise children under institutional care.

How did tens of thousands of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children and small groups of American Jewish social workers come to influence the upbuilding of the Jewish national home? The fate of Jewish children in Late Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine lies at the nexus of an Ottoman, and then British colonial-imperial presence, American Jewish philanthropy, and the political Zionist movement. Children featured prominently in the distribution of money and power in the Yishuv—especially during the interwar period—wherein greater numbers of children in institutions or communities correlated to larger sums of money raised and received and to more power and influence for the larger, wealthier groups or institutions vis-à-vis other Jewish communities, Zionist and American Jewish organizations, and the British Mandate officials. The unfolding story of the establishment of permanent child welfare systems reflects a process of reacting to local and global crises as well as the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe and the Russian Empire. By incorporating developments in child welfare

and attitudes toward children in the late 19th and early 20th centuries within the contexts of war, poverty, and nation-building, this study explores the role of disadvantaged and orphaned children in the years preceding the establishment of the State of Israel. This study traces how attitudes shifted toward the care and education of vulnerable children and argues that the fate of Jewish orphans was seen as a crucial measure of the success of the Zionist project and of the moral character of the Jewish community at large. This dissertation examines key developments and issues relevant to orphanhood in the Yishuv, such as the influence of American and Jewish views on charity and childhood, Jewish religious values, corruption and mismanagement in orphanages, among others.

Literature Review

Social Welfare and Institution Building in the Yishuv

The literature on Jews and orphanages is wide-ranging, which makes the absence of a historical study on orphanages and orphans in the Yishuv even more striking.[1] Studies from the disciplines of social work, memoir, oral history, and history examine individual Jewish institutions and developments in Jewish communal welfare, particularly in Eastern Europe.[2]

[1] Ella Ayalon published two articles on the subject: "'Orphan Visitors' in Jerusalem/מבקרות יתומים בירושלים", *Zmanim: A Historical Quarterly* 126 (Fall 2014): 72-83 [Hebrew]; and "Orphan Relief in the Jewish Community in Jerusalem during and in the Aftermath of the First World War," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 3.1 (May 2016): 115–137. Ayalon's dissertation on the subject was not available to the author as of this writing. Abigail Jacobson also recently published on a Christian orphanage in Jerusalem: "The Orphan, the Donor, and the Photograph: Humanitarianism and Photography in Post-First World War Jerusalem," *Middle Eastern Studies* 57.1 (2021): 37-56. Some attention has also been paid to the Syrian or Schneller Orphanage, which falls outside of the scope of this dissertation. See: Gil Gordon, "From a Mission Station to a Neighborhood: The Development of the 'Syrian Orphanage' (Schneller) Compound in Jerusalem in the Late Ottoman Period," *Cathedra: For the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv* 128 (2008): 73-100 [Hebrew]; Yoel Amir, "Postcards as Receipts for Donations to the Schneller Orphanage," *Cathedra: For the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv* 140 (2011): 188-189 [Hebrew].

[2] See: Natan M. Meir, "From Communal Charity to National Welfare: Jewish Orphanages in Eastern Europe Before and After World War I," *East European Jewish Affairs* 39.1 (2009): 19-34. Meir's article most closely aligns with this dissertation in terms of approach and questions asked. He has yet to develop it into a monograph and instead published a book on Kiev before WWI: *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis: A History, 1859-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010). In that monograph, two chapters on the developments of Jewish philanthropy and

Reena Sigman Friedman's comprehensive study of American Jewish orphanages at the turn of the 20th century reveals an emphasis on the Americanization of Jewish orphans, rather than continuation of Jewish tradition and education.[3] Yet, a number of studies of individual Jewish orphanages in the United States highlight the preservation of Jewish communal life as the central mission of the institutions.[4] Since the character and concerns of Jewish communities throughout the world and at different points in history inevitability vary, geographic studies focused on orphanages in South Africa, England, and Argentina provide essential insight into the particularities of each community.[5] Other smaller studies investigate women's roles in Jewish orphanages in Argentina and Holocaust orphans' experiences in postwar Dutch orphanages.[6] Comparative studies like Nurith Zmora's analysis of child welfare in Progressive era Baltimore utilize Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic orphanages as case studies to challenge the normative view that institutions were detrimental to child development and long term prosperity.[7]

communal life are useful as a comparative case. See also: Edward S. Conway, "The Origins of the Jewish Orphanage," *Transactions* 22 (1970): 53-66; and "Orphans in Jewish History," *Moment* (June 30, 1995): 37.

[3] Reena Sigman Friedman, *These Are Our Children: Jewish Orphanages in the United States, 1880-1925* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 1994).

[4] See: Hyman Bogen, *The Luckiest Orphans: A History of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum of New York* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Ira A. Greenberg, ed. *The Hebrew National Orphan Home: Memories of Orphanage Life* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2001); S. Wolfenstein, *Fiftieth Anniversary of the Jewish Orphan Asylum, Cleveland, Ohio, 1868-1918* (Waltham: Brandeis University Libraries, 2008); Howard Goldstein, *The Home on Gorham Street and the Voices of Its Children* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996); Gary Edward Polster, *Inside Looking Out: The Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum, 1868-1924* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990).

[5] See: Veronica Belling, *From Cape Jewish Orphanage to Oranjia Jewish Child and Youth Centre: A Hundred Years Caring for Children, 1911-2011* (Cape Town, South Africa: Oranjia Jewish Child and Youth Centre, 2014); Lawrence Cohen, *Care and Conflict: The Story of the Jewish Orphanage at Norwood* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2014); Susan L. Tananbaum, "Childcare Dilemmas: Religious Discourse and Services among Jewish and Christian 'Orphanages,'" *Jewish Culture and History* 12 (2010): 159-74.

[6] Donna Guy, "Women's Organizations and Jewish Orphanages in Buenos Aires, 1918-1955," *Jewish History* 18.1 (2004): 75-93; Diane L. Wolf, "'There Was Never a Kind Word': Life in Jewish Orphanages," in *Beyond Anne Frank: Hidden Children and Postwar Families in Holland*, 228-272 (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007).

[7] Nurith Zmora, *Orphanages Reconsidered: Child Care Institutions in Progressive Era Baltimore* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

Scholars and practitioners have explored the concept of child welfare in the Yishuv and the State of Israel from a social work approach centered on statistics and professional evaluation. Moshe Smilansky, Shoshana Weintraub, and Yehuda Hanegbi published the first comprehensive work on child welfare in Israel in 1960.[8] Anita Weiner and Eliezer David Jaffe pioneered the academic study of child welfare in the school of social work, and their respective publications provide an evaluation of social work practices for children beginning in the pre-state years.[9] Others more recently have looked at universal values in conceptions of childhood and the family more broadly in the Yishuv, as well as a new or renewed interest in social work and social workers during the pre-state years.[10] What has been missing is a historical study of Jewish children in Palestine, who comprised the foundation of a new Jewish society, and the incredible role they played in the upbuilding of the Jewish State.

Existing historical studies of Zionisms, the Yishuv, and the development of Israeli society, do not address the Jewish orphan problem in Palestine. To the extent to which the present literature engages with the study of the rescue and rehabilitation of Jewish children, it is through the Youth Aliyah movement, which overlooks the decades prior to 1932—the primary focus of this dissertation. And indeed, much has been published on Youth Aliyah from Europe to Palestine, primarily from leaders of the movement themselves and organizations involved in the

[8] Moshe Smilansky, Shoshana Weintraub, and Yehuda Hanegbi, eds. *Child and Youth Welfare in Israel* (Jerusalem: The Henrietta Szold Institute for Child and Youth Welfare, 1960).
[9] See: Anita Weiner, "The History of Child Placement in the Land of Israel During the Mandate," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 56.4 (1980): 328-340; Eliezer David Jaffe, *Child Welfare in Israel* (New York: Praeger, 1982); Jaffe, *Israelis in Institutions: Studies in Child Placement Practice and Policy* (New York, NY: Gordon and Breach, 1983).
[10] See: Nava Dekel and Ruth Kark, "Universal Values in Childhood Concepts and Education in the 'New Yishuv,' 1882-1914," *Israel Affairs* 25.1 (2019): 85-101; Tammy Razi, "The Family is Worthy of Being Rebuilt: Perceptions of the Jewish Family in Mandate Palestine, 1918-1948," *Journal of Family History* 35.4 (2010): 395-415; Ayana Halpern, "Jewish Social Workers in Mandatory Palestine: Between Submission and Subversion under Male Leadership," *NASHIM* 35 (2019): 74-96; Mimi Ajzenstadt and John Gal, "Social Work and the Construction of Poverty in Palestine in the 1930s," *Qualitative Social Work* 14.2 (2015): 154-169.

project like the Jewish Agency and Hadassah.[11] Those publications focus on its founders, Henrietta Szold and Recha Freier, in addition to the logistics of rescue operations, like diplomacy, fundraising, and politics. In addition to Youth Aliyah, Erica B. Simmons published one of the most comprehensive studies of Hadassah's social welfare work in the Yishuv in 2006.[12] In it, Simmons argues that maternalism and "child-saving" ideals of the Progressive reform movement influenced Hadassah's work rather than Zionism.

Yet American Progressivism was more important than any other set of influences on Hadassah: It was in fact the American-based, avowedly Progressive American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's (hereafter the Joint) initiative to identify the needs of the Jewish community in Palestine in the aftermath of WWI, to determine how best to distribute relief aid, and then to establish permanent child welfare systems. In a different, but no less consequential omission, Hadassah generally has been the focus of studies of health care and social welfare in the Yishuv. And in the most recent, comprehensive history of Hadassah, discussion of its orphan work is absent.[13] Similarly, Hadassah's nation-building activities—framed as charity work or women's work—are absent from histories of Zionism. Yet many orphanage institutions and

[11] See: Recha Freier, *Let the Children Come: The Early History of Youth Aliyah*; Marian G. Greenberg, *There is Hope for Your Children: Youth Aliyah, Henrietta Szold and Hadassah*; Jewish Agency for Palestine, *Let Facts Speak for Youth Aliyah: Report of Child and Youth Aliyah to the 22nd Zionist Congress at Basle*; Moshe Kol, *Youth Aliyah: Past, Present and Future*; Walter Laqueur, *Generation Exodus: The Fate of Young Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany* and, most recently, Dvora Hacohen, *To Repair a Broken World, The Life of Henrietta Szold, Founder of Hadassah* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021).

[12] Erica Simmons, *Hadassah and the Zionist Project* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006). See also: Erica B. Simmons, "Playgrounds and Penny Lunches in Palestine: American Social Welfare in the Yishuv," *American Jewish History* 92.3 (September 2004): 263-297; Zipora Shory-Rubin and Shifra Shvarts, "The 'Guggenheimer—Hadassah Playgrounds' in the 1920s," *Cathedra: For the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv* 86 (1998): 75-98 [Hebrew]; Zipora Shory-Rubin, "The 'Cafeteria': The Hadassah School Luncheons Program in Eretz Israel," *Cathedra: For the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv* 92 (1999): 107-134 [Hebrew]; Mira Katzburg-Yungman, *Hadassah: American Women Zionists and the Rebirth of Israel,* trans. Tammy Berkowitz (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012); Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

[13] Mira Katzburg-Yungman, *Hadassah: American Women Zionists and the Rebirth of Israel* (Portland: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012).

children's villages were managed or attempted to be managed by Zionists and driven in many arenas by Zionist values, focusing precisely on teaching children the Hebrew language, agricultural and trade skills, and one's responsibility to the community and the Land.

Keeping these lacunae in steady focus, and, building on Simmons' important work, the dissertation demonstrates how the specific work of caring for and educating disadvantaged and orphaned children in institutions created a space in which Zionist and American Jewish philanthropists and social workers laid the foundations for permanent welfare systems of the State of Israel. Further, it was the orphanage institution itself that maximized their impact due to its very nature: the centralized and controlled ecosystem facilitating the reinforcement of norms and ideals through every aspect of daily life; the unifying nature of social life in shared communal living, studying, and working spaces; and the unmatched fundraising power to provide greater resources and support for the children than was possible in private homes.

Regional and Comparative Perspective

Jewish orphans and those who cared for them have yet to receive their due in Middle East and North African Studies; for instance, Nazan Maksudyan examines orphans and poor children in the late Ottoman Empire to the exclusion of Jews in Palestine.[14] Other works address childhood in modern Egypt and British missionary activity among Palestinian Muslim children and the Middle East in general.[15] Memoirists and early childhood development specialists have also taken an interest in the contemporary Middle East without utilizing Israel in their country by

[14] Nazan Maksudyan, *Orphans and Destitute Children in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014).
[15] See: Heidi Morrison, *Childhood and Colonial Modernity in Egypt* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Heather J. Sharkey, ed. *Cultural Conversions: Unexpected Consequences of Christian Missionary Encounters in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2013).

country examinations.[16] Some of the issues that became popularized in the post-state years—discrimination towards Jews from the Middle East and North Africa, their migration to the State of Israel in the 1950s, religious-secular divides in care and education—have their roots in this early history that is required to fully understand the longevity and origins of these critical issues.

Finally, no cross-cultural, transhistorical, comprehensive review of orphans and orphanhood exists in the canon of Childhood Studies. Treatments of orphans can be found as subtopics in larger volumes on Childhood Studies[17] or in a specific geographical and/or historical period.[18] Notably, the growing field of Orphan Studies lacks historical analyses of orphanages, orphanhood, or childhood in Palestine or Israel. Policy-focused studies on children living in institutions are beginning to emerge in the 21st century from mainly European Union countries looking to reform child welfare practices.[19] This existing literature in Childhood Studies and Orphan Studies contributes key concepts and lenses to the theoretical approach of the dissertation. From these well-known concepts in Childhood Studies, the dissertation is driven by the notion that childhood is a social construct determined by time and place, so that post-WWI Palestine, the development of the Jewish State, and circumstances of orphaned refugees may all

[16] See: Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, *Remembering Childhood in the Middle East: Memoirs from a Century of Change* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Safaa El-Kogali and Carolyn Krafft. *Expanding Opportunities for the Next Generation: Early Childhood Development in the Middle East and North Africa* (Washington, District of Columbia: World Bank Group, 2015).

[17] See: Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1550*, 2nd ed (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005); Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge, UK, and Malden, MA: Polity, 2001).

[18] Examples abound across the globe with the most historical studies focusing on Europe, Great Britain, and America, and contemporary studies that look at Asia and Africa. Relevant to this study and its relationship with American attitudes to child welfare, see: Lori Askeland, *Children and Youth in Adoption, Orphanages, and Foster Care: A Historical Handbook and Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2005); LeRoy Ashby, *Endangered Children: Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse in American History* (New York: Twayne, 1997).

[19] See: Kevin D. Browne,, C. E. Hamilton-Giachritsis, R. Johnson, et al., "A European Survey of the Number and Characteristics of Children Less Than Three Years Old in Residential Care at Risk of Harm," *Adoption & Fostering* 29.4 (2005): 23–33; Catherine E. Hamilton-Giachritsis and Kevin D. Browne, "Forgotten Children? An Update on Young Children in Institutions across Europe," *Early Human Development* 88.12 (2012): 911–914; United Nations Office of the High Commissioner Human Rights (OHCHR), *The Rights of Vulnerable Children under the Age of Three: Ending Their Placement in Institutional Care* (Geneva, Switzerland: OHCHR, 2012).

contribute to a distinctive understanding of what orphanhood meant in the early 20th century. While contemporary historical writing in Childhood Studies, which places children at the center of the action as agents of historical change, can be seen as reactionary to the historical treatment of children as non-actors or altogether invisible, the dissertation will show that it need not be one or the other; in the case of orphaned children in the Yishuv, children were both subjects of the institutions and agents of change within them.

Sources, Theory, and Methodology

Primary Sources

The dissertation offers a social history of orphanhood, as lived and forged in the emergent, burgeoning, and eventually enduring, child welfare systems in Jewish Palestine and how changes in attitudes toward disadvantaged and orphaned children influenced their housing, education, vocational training, religious practices, and socialization. I examine the relevant records of several organizations responsible for childcare, including: the Joint, Hadassah, the Zionist Commission, and the Jewish Agency, while news stories, journal articles, opinion pieces, and letters published in newspapers reveal public attitudes toward and professional observations of orphaned children and general child welfare during key periods of upheaval and conflict in the Yishuv. Hadassah's and the Joint's official correspondence and institutional reports address a variety of issues, including budgets and fundraising, immigration policies and practices, housing, health care, religious and social activity, education, food, material goods, and more. In addition, private Orthodox orphanage institutions' correspondence with these organizations reveals the previously undocumented conditions of orphans in living in those private institutions. Indeed:

> Histories of the orphan are shaped by the available evidence; because historical studies must collect primary sources in order to generate statistical profiles and offer conceptual interpretations, many studies see orphans through the lens of the institutions that document their lives.[20]

The development of attitudes towards child welfare and orphanhood were determined based on a close historical analysis of unpublished letters, meeting minutes, annual reports, memos, and telegrams of Hadassah, the Joint, the orphanage institutions' leaders, concerned relatives, and various actors involved in Jewish child-saving during this period. Additionally, published materials such as local newspapers, newsletters, brochures, pamphlets, bulletins, correspondence, calendars, and other fundraising materials provide insight into the evolving image of orphans and orphanhood and its significance in the Jewish imagination. Memoirs and books written by organizational leaders reveal how they understood their role, their mission and goals, and changes over time.

In looking at these primary sources we see, clearly, the salience of child welfare policy in Zionist thinking and nation-building, and how looking at that cluster of activities sheds light on Zionist nation-building as a whole. In these materials, the centrality of the upbuilding of the Jewish national home in Palestine vis-à-vis the orphan and child-saving is front and center. As Hugh Cunningham puts it:

> Manuals for parents provide us with ideals of child-rearing in the past, and although we know that they were hardly ever followed to the letter by those who read them, and that frequently the advice was totally ignored, we also know that sometimes they were taken seriously; changes in emphasis in the advice books may be both a symptom and a reflection of changes in practice. Secondly, ideas about childhood fed through into the discourses and actions of philanthropists and governments; a major theme of the book will be that public action shaped the lives of innumerable children in the centuries with which we are concerned.[21]

[20] Cheryl Nixon, "Orphans" Oxford Bibliographies in "Childhood Studies," 2017.
[21] Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (New York: Longman, 1995), 3.

These dynamic tensions are present in the study's primary sources and highlight how ideas and practices are not the same as immediate reality, but rather mediated by it. By discerning attitudes and practices reflected in monthly and annual reports, correspondence, memos, and budgets for child welfare systems in the Yishuv over several decades, this study offers a blueprint of change over time that can be compared with general developments in the Yishuv and globally to better understand drivers of change as well as reactions to change.

Wherever possible, as found within the institutional documents themselves, children's voices are brought into the historical analysis, and this act is important. Researchers of children and childhood, particularly if not focused on the contemporary period, simply do not have access to interviews or oral histories of children—should they have even been asked how they feel about a given situation. The field of Childhood Studies tends to rely on oral history, diaries, memoirs, and material culture as sources for constructing histories of childhood. The historiography of medieval and modern childhood asks much of limited bodies of evidence, such as a 14th century preaching manual, where researchers must examine whether something seemingly unrelated can indicate an awareness of childhood, a distinction from adults, or the relationship between parents and children. As such, historians of childhood have sought to reconstruct children's lives and experiences by extrapolating meaning and information from art, archaeology, books, artifacts, and personal writings.

A few memoirs and monographs containing children's memories of a single institution do exist in Western institutions whereby children's voices and memories (and all the challenges inherent in using memories in historical analysis) contribute to a broader understanding of the experience of orphanhood from the orphan's perspective.[22] In the case of Jewish Palestine in the

[22] See: Gary Edward Polster, *Inside Looking Out: The Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum, 1868-1924* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1990); John E. Murray, *The Charleston Orphan House: Children's Lives in the First*

first half of the 20th century, access to children's voices—at least to the extent that the author has been able to locate—remains largely within the institutional documentation written by adults. The historical analysis of institutional documents as well as published and unpublished materials supports the study's goal of mapping social attitudes toward orphaned children rather than solely focusing on their life experiences in a particular time and place. By bringing children, orphaned and disadvantaged, from the margins of the historical record, this study enriches understandings of 19th and 20th century Jewish migrations, social and political histories of the Yishuv, nation-building, Zionisms, social and ethnic minorities in Palestine, and more. Within the field of Childhood Studies, the case of Jewish Palestine challenges accepted notions and norms regarding institutional care, the history of orphanages, the role of religion and the nation-state, and evolving attitudes toward orphans and orphanhood.

Theory and Methodology

An important theoretical approach to writing a history of orphans and orphanhood is the notion of "childhood as a (universal) constituent of (all) social structures, which, nevertheless, takes different forms and meanings depending on the given society it is part of."[23] Scholars of Childhood Studies have recently begun to develop new theoretical frameworks for understanding the processes of identity formation among children and how their social values are determined in society. Pierre Bourdieu's (1930-2002) concepts of social and cultural capital address the social connections, habitus, education, and linguistic advantages that children acquire in the process of

Public Orphanage in America (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013); Thomas J. Tobias, *The Hebrew Orphan Society of Charleston, S.C. Founded in 1801: An Historical Sketch* (Published by the Society, 1957); S.M. Fleischman, *The History of the Jewish Foster Home and Orphan Asylum of Philadelphia, 1855-1905* (Published by the Board of Managers, 1905).

[23] Jacqueline Knorr and Angela Nunes, "Introduction," in *Childhood and Migration: From Experience to Agency*, ed. Knorr (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 11-12.

growing up and developing an identity. Scholars now integrate his theoretical models into the field of Childhood Studies, which are instructive for the Palestine/Israel case.[24] Additional subfields of Childhood Studies exploring the intersections of childhood with nationalism yield helpful understandings of concepts of childhood in modern nation-states, of childhood as a cultural construct, and the role of education in shaping national identities—all of which are relevant to framing this study.[25]

This study spans the years 1881-1939, since these were the prime years of a global effort to rescue Jewish children orphaned or made destitute by violence and poverty and settle them in a Jewish national home in Palestine. While other factors for migration comingled throughout these years (religious, Zionist, economic, political, and the rise of Nazi Germany), this dissertation focuses on the Joint's and Hadassah's project to establish permanent child welfare systems, as this effort laid the groundwork for and the eventual transition to social welfare departments in the State of Israel. This study treats programs aimed at the migration of Jewish youth to Palestine in the 1930s, such as Youth Aliyah, as outside the scope of the dissertation, since the mission of that program was fundamentally different from the development of child welfare systems underway.

Chapter Outline

Chapter one introduces key concepts, historical background, and social, political, and religious contexts of the pre-WWI Yishuv in which the growing numbers of disadvantaged and

[24] Leena Alanen, Liz Brooker, and Berry Mayall, eds., *Childhood with Bourdieu* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Abigail Knight, "Social and Cultural Capital of Childhood," Oxford Bibliographies in "Childhood Studies," 2017.
[25] See: Sharon Stephens, ed., *Children, and the Politics of Culture* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995); Jim Goddard, Sally McNamee, Adrian James, and Allison James, eds., *The Politics of Childhood: International Perspectives, Contemporary Developments* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

orphaned Jewish children emerge. It provides an overview of immigration policies and practices under the Ottomans, traditional support systems for vulnerable populations in Jewish communities, modern Jewish attitudes toward orphanhood, and early attempts at orphan care through the establishment of orphanages before WWI. In this chapter, I illuminate how the orphan crisis developed and how key attitudes and themes commonly associated with later historical moments in Israel developed much earlier on. I argue that the Jewish orphan problem in Ottoman Palestine—which captured the attention of Ottoman officials as well as Jewish communities worldwide—threatened the long-term viability and success of the Zionist nation-building project.

Chapter two focuses on the role of American Jewish philanthropists and institutions in addressing the needs of the Jewish community in the immediate aftermath of WWI and its role in shaping ideals and attitudes toward disadvantaged and orphaned children. The chapter traces the implementation of those ideals, the shifts between foster care and institutions as placements for children, relations with the British Mandate government, the challenges of Jewish war orphans emerging in both Europe and Palestine, and the transition of leadership and responsibility from the Joint to Hadassah. I argue that that the philanthropic intervention for disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children in need of institutional care created an opportunity for American Jewish leaders to influence aspects of what would become a new Hebrew society and that the orphanage maximized that impact.

Chapter three examines the challenges and controversies in the development of child welfare systems in Palestine through an overview of the post-WWI Jewish communities in Palestine, the political barriers to child welfare work, American Jewish material contributions and fundraising abroad, and disputes over the "best place" for orphaned children. Because of the

context and conditions in Palestine, I argue that the orphanage institution was in many ways an ideal place to raise and educate children despite accepted wisdom of the time.

Finally, chapter four focuses on how disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children living under institutional care were raised to be future citizens in the Jewish national home by way of serious and thoughtful consideration of how to educate and train them for work and independent living. The chapter analyzes the distinct features of childhood in the interwar period under the British Mandate, the informal and formal approaches to educating and training Jewish children, and the ways in which the socialization of children and their families contributed to the Zionist project. By examining the practical work and ideological entanglements of child welfare, I argue that Jewish war orphan problem became a central, but seemingly forgotten, fixture in the imaginations of Jewish communities worldwide because the stakes were so high—to save a Jewish child was a literal and metaphorical representation of saving the Jewish people. The dissertation concludes with brief review of the material and arguments covered and directions for further research.

Chapter 1

Under the Ottomans: Jewish Child Welfare and Institutions

The previous administrations had not been able to cope in any effective way with the orphan problem and towards the end of 1916, when there was practically no local relief committee the matter had grown into a grave public scandal which struck even the Turkish authorities. Everywhere little Jewish children laid down and died in the streets, little families of two, three and four huddled together under the parental guidance of some ten-year-old older brother or sister. Most of them had not any shelter for the night and they slept in some corner on the pavement.[26] —Eliezer Siegfried Hoofien, 1918

While the primary focus of the dissertation is on the robust years of development and change for child welfare practices, ideologies, and institutions between the World Wars, it is important to establish a baseline understanding of what the landscape of Jewish life looked like in Ottoman Palestine, how native and immigrant Jewish children came to need state support, and the social, religious, and transnational attitudes that shaped Jewish childhoods in Palestine. This chapter examines the challenges and life trajectories of an orphaned or disadvantaged Jewish child before the intervention by American Jewish philanthropists that occurred during the interwar period. It seeks to uncover the foundations for attitudes toward orphans, charity, and social responsibility for the community's most vulnerable populations. Finally, this chapter discusses the political, social, religious, and geographical contexts within which child welfare networks and institutions developed and then operated; the challenges of 19th and early 20th century childhood that evolved alongside changes in social attitudes towards children and their place in society; and a comparison of modern Jewish attitudes toward orphanhood that informed both the particular case of orphanhood in Jewish Palestine as well as the attentions of Jewish

[26] Eliezer Siegfried Hoofien and the Joint Distribution Committee of Funds for Jewish War Sufferers, *Report of Mr. S. Hoofien to the Joint distribution committee of the American funds for Jewish war sufferers, New York, concerning relief work in Palestine from August 1st, 1917, to May 31, 1918* (New York: Schoen printing co, 1918), https://lccn.loc.gov/19008388.

communities worldwide to the orphan problem in Palestine. As such, I argue that the Jewish orphan problem in Ottoman Palestine—which captured the attention of Ottoman officials as well as Jewish communities worldwide—threatened the long-term viability and success of the Zionist nation-building project.

Immigration Practices and Policies

Due to severe poverty, disease, high unemployment rates, and a general lack of industrial opportunities in Ottoman Palestine, Jewish communities relied on financial support from Jews and Jewish organizations worldwide, in addition to diplomatic support from well-connected Jews and non-Jewish officials in foreign governments. Jewish immigration to *Eretz Israel* (the Holy Land) up until the late 19th century was largely religiously motivated. Both Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews—men, women, widows, and religious students—joined existing Jewish communities in Palestine prior to periods of *aliyot* (pl. Jewish immigration to the Holy Land) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in order to fulfill the *mitzvah* (commandment) of praying, living, and being buried in Eretz Israel.

Conventional Zionist historiography delineates European Jewish immigration to Palestine into five distinct waves of aliyot: the First Aliyah, 1882-1903, consisted of colonists who established the *moshavot* (agricultural settlements); the Second Aliyah, 1904-1914, comprised Zionist *halutzim* and *halutzot* (male and female pioneers) who were typically single or coupled young adults; the Third Aliyah, 1919-1923, were Zionist socialist pioneers who came in groups and founded the *kibbutzim* (communal settlements); the Fourth Aliyah, 1924-1929, primarily consisted of groups of upper class Polish migrants; and the Fifth Aliyah, 1933-1939, comprised German Jews (also known as *yekkes*, or Jews of German-speaking origin) fleeing Hitler's

Germany. Zionist historiography typically has categorized the first, second, and third aliyot as the ideologically-driven pioneer heroes who established moshavim and kibbutzim and were idealized as emblems of the Zionist dream, though these debates among historians have largely been settled and immigrants from this time acknowledged also as refugees driven by violence and economic strain first and perhaps religious or ideological factors second.[27] Some Jewish pioneers chasing the romantic pull of hope for a more prosperous, meaningful life in Eretz Israel found conditions to be harsh and unsupportive of their Zionist ideals, which resulted in a number of them leaving for the U.S., Canada, or back to Europe prior to the outbreak of WWII.[28] The migrations of Jews from North Africa and Western Asia who arrived in Palestine during this time—a mix of Zionists, religious Jews, families, and orphaned children fleeing anti-Jewish violence and oppression—are still less incorporated into major historical works on Zionism, but more work has been done to highlight these previously overlooked migrations.[29] Finally, the

[27] Hizky Shoham argues that despite Gur Alroey's critiques of the distinction between ideological and non-ideological migration as ahistorical in terms of their demography, the Second and Third Aliyot are still considered to be the "core ethos" of Zionist migration by Zionist historiography. See Hizky Shoham, "From 'Great History' to 'Small History': The Genesis of Zionist Periodization" in *Israel Studies* 18.1 (Spring 2013): 31-55. Indeed, Alroey writes: "Zionist historiography took it as an axiom that the Jews who came to Palestine in the first three "pioneering" waves of immigration were olim (ascenders) and not immigrants" (6). See Gur Alroey, *An Unpromising Land: Jewish Migration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014). In contrast, Yossi Ben-Artzi frames all categories (religious, political, social, and economical) as legitimate push factors for ideologically motivated migration from Europe in his work. He further argues that ideologies shifted upon arrival, so that those driven to Palestine by say economic reasons adapted cultural and national motivations for staying and establishing *moshavim* and *kibbutzim*. See Yossi Ben-Artzi, "Imitation or Original? Shaping the Cultural Landscape of Pioneer Jewish Settlement in Eretz Israel (1882–1914)," *Journal of Historical Geography* 22.3 (1996): 308-326. See also Hanna Herzog, "Redefining Political Spaces: A Gender Perspective on the 'Yishuv' Historiography," *Journal of Israeli History* 21.1-2 (2002): 1-25.

[28] See for example most notably in the writings of halutzot from the first waves in *The Ploughwoman*; Boaz Neumann, *Land and Desire in Early Zionism*; Though Alroey also comments how "obvious" it was the Jews migrating to Palestine were largely governed by "push" factors in their countries of origin rather than "pull" factors in Palestine. Shoham points out this was also only possible until 1924 when the U.S. passed an immigration bill restricting immigration; also, the line drawn for the Fourth Aliya to begin as Jews shut out of the U.S. turned to Palestine as a supposedly less-desired refuge (the basis for charges that they were not purely motivated by Zionist ideals and therefore less than previous migrants). Mordechai Eliav also notes that one of the functions of the consulates in Jerusalem was to assist the "thousands of immigrants who came to Palestine from 1882 onwards, a substantial number failed to integrate and found no means of subsistence," (379).

[29] See: Ari Ariel, *Jewish-Muslim Relations and Migration from Yemen to Palestine in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Yosef Tobi, *The Jews of Yemen: Studies in Their History and Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Yehuda Nini, *The Jews of the Yemen, 1800–1914* (New York: Harwood Academic Publishers,

conventional Zionist narratives tended to ignore the early 19th century migration of Ashkenazi Jewish students of Rabbi Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna (*Aliyat Talmidei Ha-GRA*).[30] And in histories of the pre-state period of nation-building, immigration, and Zionisms, little, if any, mention is made of the lives of children or orphans.[31] Yet, it is precisely during these early periods of migration prior to the rise of Nazism in the early 1930s that *thousands* of immigrant Jewish children—some orphaned by one or both parents, others from destitute families—fled violence and poverty in their home countries to come to Eretz Israel.

A catalyst for the first major waves of Jewish children migrating from Eastern Europe was the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 and subsequent persecution of Jews in the Russian Empire. The anti-Jewish "May Laws" of 1882 created greater economic pressure on and discrimination against Russian Jews who already struggled to support large families. Through traditional support systems, notably centered on the *kehillah* (lit. "congregation" but refers generally to a local Jewish community), Jews throughout the Russian Empire, Eastern and Western Europe, Palestine, and worldwide attempted to manage the individual and communal effects of antisemitic violence and socioeconomic pressures with organized self-help. The kehillah supported its residents—including widows, orphans, the sick, and the elderly—by

1991); Reuben Ahroni, *Yemenite Jewry: Origins, Culture, and Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

[30] See: Immanuel Etkes, *The Gaon of Vilna: The Man and His Image*, trans. Jeffrey M. Green (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[31] For example: Howard Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (New York: Knopf, 2007); Jehuda Reinharz and Itamar Rabinovich, *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2007); Alan Dowty, *The Jewish State: A Century Later* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Ben Halpern and Jehuda Reinharz, *Zionism and the Creation of a New Society* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2000); Otherwise, children surface in general histories more commonly in reference to the contours of the development of the education systems [Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2012)] or through the lens of women's experiences [Margalit Shilo, *Princess or Prisoner?: Jewish Women in Jerusalem, 1840-1914* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2005)].

collecting and distributing money, running soup kitchens, providing medical and burial services, schooling, trade training and apprenticeships, and facilitating informal foster care.

The ability of the kehillah to support orphaned children weakened in the Russian Empire as two pressing factors emerged: the Jewish population grew by 223 percent between 1825 and 1900; and the social and economic deterioration of Jewish life following the industrial revolution, massive internal migrations, and antisemitic economic exclusion and violence culminating in devastating pogroms.[32] Improvements in sanitation and medicine lowered infant mortality rates, while birth rates remained unchanged, which increased Jewish populations relative to the growth amongst non-Jewish neighbors. Jewish religious values of caring for its most vulnerable populations, in addition to prescriptions regarding the care for infants,[33] resulted in Jewish communities having higher rates of survival and longevity. However, steady birth rates and low infant mortality meant that the stakes grew increasingly higher when parents died, since more and more children were left in need of communal support. When the social, political, and economic pressures of life in the Russian Empire exploded in concentrated outbreaks of extreme violence over several years, Jewish communities and individuals looked to Western Europe, North America, and Ottoman Palestine for respite.

Scholars have estimated that Russian and Polish Jews settled in the U.S. at rates of 40,000 between 1871 and 1880; 135,000 between 1881 and 1890; and 279,811 between 1891 to 1900; and finally 704,245 between 1901 and 1910.[34] Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Jews left

[32] Alroey, *An Unpromising Land*, 36.
[33] See: W.M. Feldman, "The Infant and Its Mother," in *The Jewish Child: Its History, Folklore, Biology, & Sociology* (New York: Bloch, 1918), 173-202. The chapter covers topics including the infant's immediate care needs, bathing, breastfeeding, weaning, diet after weaning, sleep, growth, the evil eye, illegitimate children and more.
[34] Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jew Under Tsars and Soviets* (New York: Macmillian, 1964), 87-88. Baron also describes earlier westward migration of Russian Jews in the 1840s to and thru Germany and Austria and the great Russian famine and epidemic of 1868-69 that pushed Jews out from Russia and Poland. Zvi Gitelman produces comparable numbers in his book, *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to*

for Canada, Western Europe, Australia, South America, and South Africa.[35] Yet, the period of 1881-1903 proves difficult to trace the journey of individual and groups of orphaned Jewish children from Europe, the Russian Empire, North Africa and West Asia. Few primary resources exist documenting demographic information about arrivals to Palestine during this period, and specifically, no lists of passengers, which have proved central to historical analysis of Jewish migration during this time.[36]

Officially, Russian Jews looking to immigrate to Ottoman Palestine in the 1880s could travel to Odessa to apply for a visa at the Ottoman Consul-General office. After the Ottomans restricted Jewish migration to anywhere *but* Palestine within the vast Empire, Jews had to then travel to the Empire's capital, Constantinople (present-day Istanbul, Turkey), to apply for entry to Palestine under the guises of either tourism or business. Unofficially, the Russian government was keen to push Jews out from the start of the anti-Jewish campaigns in April 1881. Restricting relocation within and between villages, access to schools and professions, and shuttering synagogues were just a few of the tactics to pressure Jewish communities in the Empire without formally expelling them. As such, authorities looked the other way when Jews crossed the border into Galicia without the mandatory exit visa. From there, some Russian Jews traveled through either Hamburg or Liverpool and remained in Western Europe or, most predominantly, continued on to the U.S., Canada, Palestine, South Africa, and other countries.[37] These efforts to

Present, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001). See also Monty Noam Penkower, "The Kishinev Pogrom of 1903: A Turning Point in Jewish History," *Modern Judaism* 24.3 (2004): 187-225; Antony Polonsky, "Social and Religious Change 1750-1914," in *The Jews in Poland and Russia: A Short History* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013), 135-170; Shaul Stampfer, *Families, Rabbis and Education: Essays on Traditional Jewish Society in Eastern Europe* (Portland, OR: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2014), 96.

[35] Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence*, 12.

[36] Alroey, *An Unpromising Land*, 30.

[37] Baron, 55-58. See also Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia: A Short History* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013); ChaeRan Y. Freeze and Jay M. Harris, *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia: Select Documents, 1772–1914* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2013); Elissa Bemporad, *Becoming Soviet Jews: The Bolshevik Experiment in Minsk* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); and Brian

flee the Russian Empire were independent moves taken up by individuals, families, or small groups with support from international Jewish relief organizations, rather than locally planned mass migrations.[38]

In fact, the notion of organizing communal migration was formally rejected by an assembly of 40 Russian Jewish leaders in St. Petersburg. Under the chairmanship of Baron Horace (Naftali Herz) de Günzburg,[39] the all-male group adopted a resolution in April 1882 dismissing "completely the thought of organizing emigration" on the grounds of "the historic rights of Jews to their present fatherland."[40] Yet, the community's most vulnerable, like widows and orphans, could not survive on such ideals alone, and they were forced to seek refuge outside of their countries of origin. And for the relative administrative ease of leaving the Russian Empire, entering Ottoman Palestine proved a more complicated obstacle to overcome.

While Ottoman bureaucracy was primarily concerned with taxation and conscription of its citizens, it also strongly opposed Jewish settlement in Palestine.[41] The Ottoman Empire's Council of Ministers issued a proclamation in November 1881 that Jews were permitted to settle as scattered groups most anywhere throughout the Empire, *except* in Palestine.[42] Ottoman authorities took this position in order to prevent "nurturing another national problem in the Empire" as well as the increase of European foreign subjects under its control.[43] However, the

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Horowitz, *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

[38] Baron, 87. It proves difficult to assess the exact demography and numbers of immigrants through the end of the 19th century, since records during this time do not distinguish among men, women, or children; but rather refer to individuals or small groups arriving in Palestine as either "Jews" or "souls."

[39] Born in 1833 to a wealthy merchant and army contractor, the Russian philanthropist founded the Society for the Promotion of Culture Among the Jews of Russia in 1863. He fought to prevent the passing of anti-Jewish decrees and participated in the Pahlen Commission of 1883-1888. He died in 1909 in St. Petersburg.

[40] Baron, 87.

[41] See: Mordecai Lee, "Governing the Holy Land: Public Administration in Ottoman Palestine, 1516-1918." *Domes* 9.1 (2000): 1-25.

[42] Neville J. Mandel, "Ottoman Policy and Restrictions on Jewish Settlement in Palestine: 1881-1908 - Part I," *Middle Eastern Studies* 10.3 (October 1974), 313.

[43] Mandel, "Ottoman Policy and Restrictions," 314.

administration had long-held views of whom they considered to be a Jew, which had implications for future policies toward Jewish immigration to the Empire. Up until the 1860s, the Ottomans did not deem Ashkenazi Jews to be Jews, politically speaking, at all because they failed to "assimilate to the Oriental way of life."[44] Rather, Ashkenazi Jews were considered "European foreigners even if they were born in Jerusalem, for there was no birthright citizenship" in the Ottoman Empire.[45] When Ottoman authorities passed a law in 1869 allowing all residents to obtain citizenship, few Ashkenazim took up the offer; they believed consular protection by foreign governments afforded them a greater sense of safety and more benefits.[46] Indeed, the position of resident aliens and the influence of the consulates was consolidated and strengthened following the establishment of six consulates in just ten years' time (1839-1849). The consulates sought representation over more and more residents in order to reinforce their diplomatic and commercial imprints and thereby fulfilling their political and commercial agendas in the Ottoman Empire.[47]

The arrival of Sephardic Jewish families from Ottoman-controlled Bulgaria carrying Ottoman papers complicated matters further; authorities could not agree on whether to designate them as foreign Jewish immigrants or citizens of the Ottoman Empire.[48] Thereafter, in 1882, the Ottoman government prohibited the settlement of Russian, Rumanian, and Bulgarian Jews in

[44] Shmuel Leher, "Germans and Jews in Palestine during the Later Periods of Turkish Rule: A Study in Influences and Relations," (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1988), 2.
[45] Eliezer Manneberg, "The Evolution of Jewish Educational Practices in the Sancak (Eyalet) of Jerusalem under Ottoman Rule," (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 1976), 42.
[46] Manneberg, 43. Benefits like evading military conscription and other legal obstacles regarding land purchase and institution building. Also, protection against harassment and persecution, increasing international trade, improving banking, mail, and sea transportation services, immigration issues, and land purchasing.
[47] Mordechai Eliav, "The German and Austrian Consular Archives in Jerusalem as a Source for the History of Palestine and its Population in the Late Ottoman Period," in David Kushner (ed), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation* (Jerusalem: Yad Itzhak Ben-Zvi Press, 1986), 372-381.
[48] Julia Philips Cohen and Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Sephardi Lives: A Documentary History, 1700-1950* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014), 192.

Palestine. Deeply suspicious of the import of foreign influence hostile to the Empire, restricting Jewish settlement as a strategy intended to deter further headaches on questions of nationality and citizenship in the Empire was but one of the many concerns of the time.[49] Delegations of Jews, often from within the *Hovevei Tzion* (Lovers of Zion) movement, traveled to Constantinople to seek exceptions to the policy. Notably, Theodore Herzl traveled to the Ottoman capital in June 1896 to request the land of Palestine to be granted to the Jews by the Sultan, Abdul Hamid II, in exchange for financial benefits and positive European press for the Empire. Hamid rejected Herzl's request on the grounds that the Ottoman Empire was not his to sell or divide as it belonged to the Ottoman people.[50] However, fear of losing territory and power to national minorities and foreign powers also fueled measures to restrict wholesale settlement of Jews in Ottoman Palestine.

When the Zionist movement declared its mission as the establishment of a Jewish state in the Holy Land at the First Zionist Congress in 1897, the Ottomans intensified measures to block immigration. However, Jewish immigration to Palestine steadily increased due to the difficulties of enforcing the laws across the far-flung neighborhoods of the Empire, European governments' refusal to adhere to the restrictions, foreign consular intervention on behalf of the Jews, and a generally inefficient bureaucracy.[51] The settlement of Jews concentrated on the four Holy Cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias. While Jerusalem was home to many religions and citizenships, of which Jews were a minority, an estimated half of the total Jewish population of

[49] Mandel, "Ottoman Policy and Restrictions," 314.
[50] Ibid. Mandel lays out a few additional reasons and the historical context for why Ottoman authorities feared Jewish settlement in Palestine and Jerusalem in particular.
[51] See: Margalit Shilo, "The Immigration Policy of the Zionist Institutions 1882-1914," *Middle Eastern Studies* 30.3 (1994), 597-617. See also Shilo, *Princess or Prisoner?*; Mandel, "Ottoman Policy and Restrictions," 312-32; and Mandel, "Ottoman Practice as Regards Jewish Settlement in Palestine: 1881-1908," *Middle Eastern Studies* 11.1 (1975): 33-46.

Palestine resided there.[52] Thus, child welfare efforts began and were concentrated in Jerusalem, where the demand for the care of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children was greatest and beyond what the local communities could handle. Initially, limited resources prevented nurses and social workers from traveling within Jerusalem as frequently as needed, much less outside the city. Meanwhile, the development and expansion of other centers of Jewish life (Hebron, Jaffa, Tiberias, Safed, and the Judean Colonies) suffered from a number of obstacles to receiving relief funds; in Hebron, no reliable individual or organization existed through which funds could be transferred and distributed; in Jaffa, the Jewish population, including the *Va'ad Ha'ir* (city council) which ran a relief organization prior to World War I, was not yet fully reconstituted in the city.[53] As such, this study focuses mainly on Jerusalem's child care institutions and initiatives, which often spread to other cities when access and funds were made possible. Because Jerusalem served as the base for establishing child welfare, social welfare, and health care systems in Palestine, the attitudes and practices of its local leadership set trends and extended influence throughout Ottoman Palestine. Jerusalem's majority population of Jews also meant that most charitable donations from abroad—supporting disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children—were managed through the city's expanding network of local governing bodies organized along religious, ethnic, and geographic lines.

[52] While population estimates during this period are conflicting and often incomplete, an Ottoman population census for 1881-1882 claims Jerusalem home to 243,022, of which 7,504 were Jews (total Jewish population of Palestine at the time was 15,011), 23,480 Christians, and 212,038 Muslims. By 1900, the Jewish population of Jerusalem nearly doubled to 14,722 in relation to total Jewish population of Palestine (23,662). These figures, of course, likely omit any number of uncounted residents. See: Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine: Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and the Mandate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

[53] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder: Palestine, General, 1918-1919, Report from the Relief Department of the Zionist Commission to Palestine, June 2, 1918, NY_AR1921_00847.pdf.

Traditional Support Systems

Throughout the 19th century, the Yishuv remained nominally capable of supporting its orphaned children as a traditional kehillah with informal fostering and communal financial support from neighbors, relatives, and *halukah* (distribution of charity). The halukah system, in which money was collected from Jews abroad and distributed in Palestine to support Jewish residents living in the Holy Land (primarily men studying Torah), suffered from a lack of systematic collection and distribution practices. Until the 18th century, the Sephardim—representing most Jews as well as the majority of working Jews[54]—controlled the receipt of funds and distributions to the whole of Jewish Palestine. Unsatisfied with their allotment, the Ashkenazim splintered off from the Sephardim and again within itself into some thirty Ashkenazi *kolelim* (collectives) to raise more funds on their own and achieve greater control over how much they receive.[55] The new system resulted in increased financial support for those smaller groups, but it also served to systematize unequal support for the rest. While some members of a kolel received an annual distribution as high as US$72, others in a neighboring kolel received as low as US$1.50.[56] In comparison, a yeshiva pupil at Volozhin in Vilna would

[54] Sephardic Jews did not typically depend solely on halukah funds and thus focused distribution on students of Talmud and Torah, as well as the poor and needy. Working Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants was a new development throughout the 19th century. Ashkenazi Jews typically relied solely upon halukah funds and distributed them across the community according to family size regardless of one's economic position. See: Akira Usuki, "The Sephardi Community of Jerusalem before World War I: A Note on a Dominant Community on the Decline," *Orient* 29 (1993): 93-108.

[55] In this context, Ashkenazim organized themselves into kolelim based on country or region of origin, which facilitated homogenous groupings around perhaps varying languages, practices, and traditions, but also kinship networks, of Eastern European Jews. This intra-ethnic organization differed from later iterations of group formations employed in kibbutzim, moshavim, and ultra-Orthodox (*Haredi*) communities in Israel. For kibbutzim and moshavim, shared social, political, and religious views were often organizing factors, in addition to national (linguistic) origins. For the *haredim*, they further divided according to the following of particular rabbis.

[56] Henrietta Szold, "Recent Jewish Progress in Palestine," *The American Jewish Year Book* 17 (New York City: American Jewish Committee, 1916), 102.

receive 75 kopeks (the equivalent of US$0.97) per week (or US$50.44 annually).[57] Meanwhile, the Yemenites, Persians, and other small "Oriental" groups were shut out of the Ashkenazi and Sephardi halukah systems altogether.[58]

Attitudes toward charity manifested in the halukah system and reflected the belief that charitable funds should not be sufficient to support oneself completely, as that, so the thinking followed, would deter Jews from entering the work force. While not all Jewish residents participated in the kolelim—some lived off businesses, investments, or direct overseas support—the opportunity for "men's work" to supplement halukah distributions was quite remote. Palestine lacked industries and manufacturing to support willing and able workers, which compelled young men to depend entirely on foreign charity.[59] Social workers and representatives from American Jewish philanthropic organizations were neither in the position to direct families to available work nor able to create ample employment opportunities under the difficult economic and political conditions in the aftermath of WWI. Even skilled workers such as shoemakers, tinsmiths, plasterers, tailors, and stonecutters found infrequent work at low wages that did not cover even one's basic food needs—much less that of a family.[60] The industries of Jerusalem at the time were "practically limited to the making and selling of religious articles such as *S'phorim* (books), and souvenirs of Palestine, olive wood, etc."[61] Outbreaks of diseases

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[57] Baron, 143. For more on American financing of Jewish communities in Poland and Lithuania during the interwar period, see Chiara Tessaris, "The war relief work of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Poland and Lithuania, 1915–18," *East European Jewish Affairs* 40.2 (2010): 127-144.
[58] The Sephardic Kolel collected funds from Tripoli, Tunis, Morocco, and Egypt, though money was distributed among the leaders, widows, and orphans. See: Szold, "Recent Jewish Progress in Palestine," 100-104. The Joint self-reported distributing $5.3 million to Poland, $2.8 million to Russia, and $1.5 million to Austria Hungary and Palestine between 1914 and 1918. See: Albert Lucas, "American Jewish Relief in the World War," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 79 (September 1918): 221-228.
[59] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Letter from Commissioner for Near East to Mr. Albert Lucas, December 9, 1919, NY_AR1921_00989.pdf.
[60] Ibid.
[61] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.

(such as measles, malaria, dysentery, and gastroenteritis), violence, and war exacerbated the underlying and unrelenting problem of poverty, which added hundreds of local children to the growing numbers of immigrant Jewish orphans in Palestine.

As in many societies, the problem of poverty in the Yishuv acutely affected women who were widowed, divorced, or abandoned by their husbands. If women were unable to work at all or earn enough to sustain themselves, they too received charity from foreign organizations as well as the kolel. Both wives of men abroad and widows collected their husband's allotment of halukah funds. Women faced low, stagnant wages in the workforce, just as did skilled male workers, but women's wages were far lower to begin with than men's wages. Where work could be found in domestic service in the homes of the aged and sick, Ashkenazi women snubbed propositions to engage in so-called menial work, as it was deemed humiliating and garnered almost insignificant wages.[62] The demand for domestic service workers, positions typically held by Sephardic and other women from North Africa or West Asia, was so great that kolelim leaders cut Ashkenazi women's halukah distributions *in half* to motivate them to take jobs that did not pay enough to support their children.[63] For the women who found work in low-paying jobs, the stigma remained on them for receiving support from the community. In some cases, children of widows were turned away from public soup kitchens because social workers complained that widows should be motivated to work and provide for their children.

Even with the supplement of halukah funds, widowed women and orphaned children comprised much of the population that needed broad financial and social support systems. Though scholars have little, if any, population data to demonstrate the significance of the "orphan problem," two nineteenth-century Montefiore censuses of Palestine provide some clues.

[62] Shilo, *Princess or Prisoner*, 117-118.
[63] Emphasis mine. Ibid.

For the census taken in 1839, it was found that 29% of all Jewish children were orphaned by the father or both parents.[64] In 1866, the number slightly decreased to 24% of all Jewish children. Meanwhile, approximately one-third of adult Jews living in Ottoman Palestine were widowed women. And, of all Jewish women, 49% were widowed in 1839 and 36% in 1866.[65] Having long been widowed, some of these women immigrated to Palestine with their adult children's families, while others lived alone or in groups in rented and shared rooms, vulnerable to reinforcing cycles of poverty, poor sanitary conditions, and exploitation. Overall, the halukah system proved quite inadequate in addressing the issue of poverty in the Yishuv, as the kehillah framework gradually weakened under the increasing strain of immigrant arrivals each year, as well as local population growth through steady birth rates and declining infant mortality rates. The developing crisis of the "Jewish war orphan" emerged in a time when understandings of childhood, child welfare, and modern guidelines for nutrition and hygiene were developing and subject to debate.

19th Century Childhood and Children

Scholarly interest in children and childhood surged in the last few decades across disciplines. While the concept of childhood might be explained as simply as a set of *ideas* characterizing a period at the beginning of one's life, that set of ideas has varied greatly across countries, cultures, genders, social classes, and historical moments in time. Meanwhile, the notion of a child has been subject to fluid markers of life experiences, age, social traditions, economic needs, and religious and secular value systems. In fact, the perceived distance between

[64] Usiel O. Schmelz, "The Demography of Jerusalem Jews," in *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period*, edited by Moshe Ma'oz (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1975), 131-132.
[65] Schmelz clarifies that divorced women who had not yet remarried may have been included in those numbers.

adults and children in terms of their behaviors and psychology was thought to be quite small; growing ever more distinct throughout the 18th century, Norbert Elias linked this change—understanding children to be developmentally different from adults, and not simply smaller adults—over time to the larger "civilizing processes" taking place in Western European societies.[66] Similarly, the founding childhood theory presented in Philippe Ariès' *L'Enfant et la Vie Familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (1960) [*Centuries of Childhood* (1962)] centered on the rise of the notion of a private life, wherein the distinction between society and family life (as well as adults and children) was drawn for the first time, according to his argument that conceptions of a medieval childhood did not exist.[67] The rising social prominence of education in the 18th century—and that it was for children during the formative years of development—further distinguished the conceptualizations of childhood and adulthood. Ariès' infamous claims that childhood did not exist in the medieval period have largely been dismissed, as scholars uncovered evidence of affection and grieving in parents toward their children, understandings of the importance of play, and guidelines for education and discipline in materials such as 14th century preaching manuals.[68]

Up until the late 19th century, it was the "*absence* of an established sequence for starting work, leaving home, and setting up an independent household" that suggested a lack of a formal understanding of childhood or a distinctive period in which a person was a child.[69] Indeed, the 19th century European aristocratic and landowning classes viewed children as a "means to stabilize the family fortune, make alliances, and work toward greater aggrandizement, with

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[66] See: Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).
[67] See: Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage, 1962).
[68] Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (New York: Longman, 1995), 33-34.
[69] Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2001), 171.

(early) marriages arranged by the parents."[70] Then, American and European Reformers' attention to the needs of children, particularly the poor, disadvantaged, and orphaned, blossomed in the 19th century, along with philosophers, doctors, artists, and others devoting their work to childhood and children.[71] In contrast to more general, modern developments in attitudes toward children, practical expressions of law and tradition regarding the child, childhood, and their developmental markers have existed in Jewish history, its texts, and its communities for centuries.[72]

For scholars of Jewish religious texts, this comes as no surprise, as "abundant evidence in the Talmud indicates that the transitional stages, which include infancy, childhood, ADOLESCENCE, and youth (young adulthood), were widely acknowledged within ancient Judaism."[73] Established conceptions of different developmental phases served as an important foundation for Jews even as shifting cultural norms and modernization changed the social value and role of the child in both family and society. The notion that a Jewish father was "obligated to redeem his (first-born) son, circumcise him, teach him Torah, teach him a trade, obtain a wife for him, and according to one other opinion, to teach him to swim as well,"[74] was rooted in ancient rabbinic law and carried through into the 19th century along with several developments in Jewish attitudes toward children and childhood. The Talmud "fixes the age of puberty for boys at

[70] George Monger, *Marriage Customs of the World: From Henna to Honeymoons* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 62.
[71] Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood*, 171.
[72] For a brief overview, see Jay R. Berkovitz, "Judaism," in *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society*, Paula Fass, ed. (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 508-511. Similarly, "according to Islamic legal thought, humans pass through three stages of development between birth and adulthood: minority, puberty, and mental maturity. Schools of Islamic law agree that children are minors [saghīr] from birth to puberty." See: Oğuzhan Tan, "Childhood and Child Marriage in Islamic Law [*İslam Hukukunda Ço- cukluk ve Çocuk Evliliği*]," *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi-Cumhuriyet Theology Journal* 22.2 (December 2018): 783-805.
[73] Berkovitz, 508.
[74] Ibid., 509. See also David Kraemer, "Images of Childhood and Adolescence in Talmudic Literature," in *The Jewish Family: Metaphor and Memory*, ed. David Kraemer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 65-80.

thirteen years, and for girls at twelve years and one day."[75] Rabbinic norms acknowledge a transition from child to adult status (religiously speaking) in the Jewish community by way of the *bar mitzvah* (lit. "son of the commandment" and refers to the religious status of a Jewish boy who has reached the age of 13).[76] At this point in the Jewish boy's life, he is now considered to be responsible for keeping the 613 commandments (of both the oral and the written law) and counted in the *minyan* (a quorum of ten Jewish adult men) for communal prayer and public Torah reading. Arising in Germany in the 11th century but only popularized in the 13th century, the bar mitzvah also represented a social distinction that permitted the boy to marry. Yet, "marriage by itself could not definitively confer adult status…in part because child marriages were still prevalent…"[77] From birth through marriage, key features of 19th century life that were particular to children—infant death, child labor, and child marriage—further reveal Jewish attitudes towards the child and childhood.

Infant Death

Across cultures, time periods, regions, and religions, infant and child death has been a near-universal fact of life. Epidemics (such as measles, malaria, dysentery, and gastroenteritis), poverty, ignorance, and violence are a few of the key variables that explained high infant mortality rates around the world. With the rise of industrialization, modernization, and modern health care, some communities were able to drastically reduce mortality rates amongst its very young at varying rates. Uziel Schmelz's systematic analysis of 19th and 20th century Jewish mortality reveals that the larger, modern trend toward declining mortality rates began earlier in

[75] Feldman, *The Jewish Child*, 364.
[76] The bar mitzvah as a ceremony is a modern development. In the Talmud, "bar" confers status: "bar hakhi" is one with a legal capacity to act; "bar metzra" is a neighbor; "bar plugta" is a litigant.
[77] Berkovitz, 508.

Jewish populations. With few exceptions, diaspora Jews had lower infant mortality rates than non-Jews amongst whom they lived by 30-80%.[78] Yet, no scientific evidence exists to explain definitively why this was the case. Scholars have pointed to practices rooted in Jewish law and tradition, including ritual handwashing and bathing, communal self-help, and extended breastfeeding; as well as features of Jewish communities such as lower rates of venereal disease, illegitimate children, alcoholism, and fertility.[79] Schmelz's study shows that Jewish communities worldwide had lower infant mortality rates on average than their non-Jewish neighbors (16% and 24% respectively circa 1860).[80] For example, an 1897 census in Imperial Russia showed that the Jewish population had a lower infant mortality rate than the rest of the population.[81] In a targeted examination of 19th century Venice, scholars compared infant mortality rates between Catholics (25-30%) and Jews (14% or less) in an attempt to demonstrate the *similarities* between them in their shared social environments—intending to counter the aforementioned hypotheses of Jewish practices as possible explanations of infant mortality rates.[82] Perhaps the divergent cultural practices between the Jews in Eastern Europe and their neighbors impacted infant mortality at higher rates due to the regional differences between Eastern and Western Europe—wherein

[78] See: Uziel O. Schmelz, *Infant and Early Childhood Mortality among the Jews of the Diaspora* (Jerusalem: Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University, 1971), cited in Renzo Derosas, "Watch Out for the Children! Differential Infant Mortality of Jews and Catholics in Nineteenth-Century Venice," in *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 36.3 (2003): 110-111. His study spanned the time period 1817-1967 examining Russia, Poland, Prussia, Bavaria, Westphalia, Serbia, Bohemia, Moravia, Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the United States, and Canada, as well as the cities of Vilna, Lvov, Krakow, Warsaw, Lodz, Budapest, Berlin, Hessen, Munich, Vienna, Florence, Trieste, Rome, Turin, Milan, Amsterdam, London, New York, St. Louis, Providence, Detroit, and Montreal. The exceptions to these statistics were cities like Vilna (205 deaths per 1,000 live births for non-Jews and 231 for Jews), Lvov (210 for non-Jews and 233 for Jews), Krakow (167 for non-Jews and 196 for Jews), and Vienna (62 for non-Jews and 66 for Jews) which had slightly lower infant mortality rates among non-Jews at the end of the 19th century. See: Schmelz, 16 (Table 1).

[79] See: Maristella Botticini, Zvi Eckstein, and Anat Vaturi, "Child Care and Human Development: Insights from Jewish History in Central and Eastern Europe, 1500–1930," *IDEAS* Working Paper Series from RePEc. (2018); Gretchen A. Condran and Ellen A. Kramarow, "Child Mortality among Jewish Immigrants to the United States," in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22.2 (1991): 223-254; Alain Bideau, Bertrand Desjardins, and Hector Perez Brignoli, *Infant and Child Mortality in the Past* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

[80] Derosas, 111-112.

[81] Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia*, 54.

[82] Derosas, 109.

similar Jewish practices in Italy did not render significantly lower rates than those of their non-Jewish neighbors simply because of broader differences between non-Jewish Italians and non-Jewish Eastern Europeans.

Though it is difficult to conclude the root causes of regional variances in infant mortality rates, it is evident that the frequency of infant death influenced religious practices to evolve to help individuals, families, and communities cope with this reality. In some Jewish communities, mourning rituals were not mandated for children dying within the first 30 days after birth; in some cases, not even within the first year.[83] The same threats posed to the general population (starvation, disease, exposure, unsanitary conditions) also contributed to infant mortality rates. However, other causes of infant death existed as well, stemming from the impact of illegitimate births within local communities. One such example is the case of a group of Jewish women running a "baby farming" business on the outskirts of Vilna in 1889, in which illegitimate infants were cared for (i.e., neglected or abused until death in most cases, or given up for adoption to childless wives) in exchange for the unwed mother's labor as a wet nurse or domestic servant in the community. This practice, while often resulting in the death of the infant, also facilitated the laundering of the social stigma of an illegitimate birth. More than providing social and financial relief for the unwed mother, the business offered the community desired services, so complicity with these troubling practices simultaneously threatened and upheld the community.[84]

In the case of Ottoman Palestine, cross-communal information on infant mortality rates under the Ottomans is difficult to ascertain due to a lack of systematic reporting and census

[83] Abraham Stahl, "Children and Childhood in the View of the Traditional Jewish-Oriental Family," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 9.3 (Autumn 1978): 347-354. For more general history of death and mourning in the Talmud, see Nissan Rubin, *Time and Life Cycle in Talmud and Midrash: Socio-Anthropological Perspectives* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2008).
[84] Freeze, "Lilith's Midwives: Jewish Newborn Child Murder in Nineteenth-Century Vilna," *Jewish Social Studies* 16.2 (Winter 2010), 1-27.

taking. Schmelz's work offers hints on infant mortality rates and trends in Jerusalem through doctors' reports on the average number of children found in family homes during two surveys (1.3 in 1839 and 1.6 in 1866) and the percentage of families with no children (34% in 1839 and 22% in 1866).[85] This data may suggest a number of possibilities: that households skewed younger (before true child bearing age) or older (after children have left the parental home to start their own); or that infant mortality rates in Jerusalem were simply comparable to those across European communities.

One of the enduring variables contributing to high infant mortality rates into the 20th century was the absence of child-rearing practices aligning with modern understandings of infant care. Stemming perhaps from both a lack of modern education and resources governing the basic tenets of infant and childcare in some communities—as well as a general suspicion of doctors' and nurses' medical practices and advice—parents relied on understandings of childcare passed down through oral tradition, which was rooted in the particularities of one's community. Physicians and social workers recounted instances where babies were not fed consistently, given adult foods and beverages too early in life, left on a dirty floor without adequate clothing or bedding, and exposed to folklore solutions to everyday problems. Adherence to these practices also cut across socioeconomic lines, wherein wealthy families shunned the idea of regularly bathing their children due to the belief that clean skin made children more vulnerable to disease.[86] Modern standards of hygiene were paramount to child survival, yet improving conditions in Palestine was a prerequisite for a public health campaign that could stand a chance

[85] Schmelz, 131. These figures do not include the Sephardim, which made up the majority of Jerusalem's Jews at the time.
[86] Schmelz, "The Demography of Jerusalem Jews," 125. Reprinted sections from Thomas Chaplin, M.D., an English physician practicing in Jerusalem, who published the 1864 article "The Fevers of Jerusalem" in the medical journal *Lancet.*

among the public: from damp, poorly lit, poorly ventilated, unmaintained ancient dwellings, a lack of sewage and garbage disposal, and contaminated water supply from unkept cisterns, to malnutrition, insufficient clothing and heating during the winter, drought, famine, and disease.[87] For children who survived infanthood and the earliest years of childhood, working to help support the family often characterized the next phase of the childhood experience.

Child Labor

For impoverished families and orphaned children, child labor was an inescapable facet of modern life. Long having labored in farms under their households, child labor moved to the workshop under the supervision of a skilled worker. Children entered the modern workforce as young as seven years old in factories, under apprenticeships, and in domestic service. These industries shared the culture of underpaying and overworking young children, employing them to perform dangerous tasks that only small hands or bodies could accomplish, and the general exploitation of needy families who sometimes did not receive compensation for their child's work. Prior to legislating child labor laws in the 20th century, to solve the problem of child labor required alternatives for occupying a child's time during the day. An initial response was to develop more options and infrastructure for schooling that extended beyond traditional views of education for Jewish children, in which boys studied in religious schools from age three until thirteen. The talented few, whose schooling beyond age thirteen was justified by their potential to become scholars, went onto study in a yeshiva. An advanced religious education for boys in traditional Jewish life represented the opportunity to gain social status amongst the Jewish elite

[87] Ibid., 122; See also I. J. Kligler, "Public Health in Palestine," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 164 (November 1932), 167-77; Hoofien, *Report*, https://lccn.loc.gov/19008388; for developments on this in the early 1910s, see Szold, "Recent Jewish Progress in Palestine."

for the child and his family, which would provide stability otherwise unattainable to Jewish families.[88] However, having learned no practical skills in school besides reading Hebrew and Aramaic, boys without a scholarly future needed to transition from school to work or apprenticeships for the economic benefit of their families as well as their prospective futures in adulthood.

For girls from families with some financial means, a more practical, limited version of religious education occurred both in girls' schools and through private tutors in the home. Girls were taught reading and writing, but through copying business letters and prayer books, rather than through authoritative religious texts.[89] Meanwhile, poor Jewish girls were exposed to some limited, informal education before often becoming employed in wealthy Jewish households as domestic servants as early as twelve.[90] Education for Eastern European Jewish girls varied so widely that it is difficult to generalize a typical childhood beyond recognizing that formal education was available, but girls tended to participate in the system for far less years than boys.[91] Instead, girls' informal education in the home focused on learning how to run a household and care for children.

With the establishment of the Paris-based *Alliance Israélite Universelle* schools throughout the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century, increasing numbers of

[88] Landownership and thus the transfer of non-liquid assets was unobtainable for Eastern European Jews, in addition to being excluded from rank systems across Europe, which provided stability to families throughout generations. For more on this, see Stampfer, *Families, Rabbis and Education.*
[89] Ibid., 169.
[90] A common social practice that Hadassah would later attempt to change in 1941 by establishing a formal vocational center, the Louis D. Brandeis Vocational Center, and integrating vocational training into the general secondary level education with the establishment of the Alice L. Seligsberg Vocational High School for Girls in Jerusalem. See: Hadassah the Women's Organization of American, Inc., *Statement to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Washington, DC, January 1946), 22.
[91] Stampfer, 170.

disadvantaged and orphaned children attended school with the support of foreign donors.[92] By extending the length of childhood through additional years of schooling, children were exposed to new features of a modern childhood such as play, literacy, sport, gardening, and time spent outdoors. Both boys and girls received training in occupational trades, although—as dictated by gender norms of the time—girls' training was largely in preparation for domestic family life. Despite the persistent focus on domestic skills within formal and informal educational frameworks, however, very early marriages of young Jewish girls—long a feature of childhood—were in decline by the beginning of the 20th century.

Child Marriage

Among many communities in the 19th century, childhood was marked by marriage and even motherhood. For orphaned children, rites of passage into adulthood such as marriage were particularly difficult to secure without a large dowry or an extensive network of extended family to attract to a potential partner. Jewish communities in Palestine practiced the religious responsibility set out in the Talmud to ensure the marriage of orphaned children by supplying the couple a house and furniture.[93] Marriageable age for boys and girls was nine and twelve respectively; though fathers could marry off their daughters during the *ketanah* (lit. small) period

[92] For more on the history of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* schools, see Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925* (Bloomington, Indian University Press, 1990); Abigail Green, "Rethinking Sir Moses Montefiore: Religion, Nationhood, and International Philanthropy in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 110.3 (June 2005), 631-658; Aomar Boum, "Schooling in the Bled: Jewish Education and the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Southern Rural Morocco, 1830-1962," *Journal of Jewish Identities* 3.1 (January 2010), 1-24; Jessica Marglin, "Modernizing Moroccan Jews: The AIU Alumni Association in Tangier, 1893-1913," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 101.4 (Fall 2011), 574-603; Isabelle S. Headrick, "A Family in Iran: Women Teachers, Minority Integration, and Family Networks in the Jewish Schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Iran, 1900–1950," *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 10.4 (2019), 307-322; André Chouraqui, *Cent Ans d'Histoire: L'Alliance Israélite Universelle et la Renaissance Juive Contemporaine (1860-1960)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965); and Georges Weill, *Emancipation et Progrès: L'Alliance Israélite Universelle et les Droits de l'Homme* (Paris: Nadir, 2000).
[93] Feldman, *The Jewish Child*, 56. Citing Kethuboth 67b.

of their lives between the ages of three and twelve years old.[94] These marriages were arranged between families and across ethnic communities within the Yishuv throughout the 19th and into the early 20th century. In some cases, the availability of halukah distributions for financial support removed the impetus to delay marriage until the couple could earn an independent living, and in this way, it was advantageous for poor families to have their children marry early and become eligible to receive additional support in their newly formed households.[95]

Given the early age range for child marriage, few Jewish adolescents by the age of fifteen were still reported as "girls" or unmarried minors in the two Montefiore censuses from 1839 and 1866. Indeed, the director of Jerusalem's Rothschild Hospital described in an 1887 paper how "fourteen-year-old mothers are nothing exceptional."[96] Early marriage also suggested dire consequences for the young mothers and their babies: The censuses revealed that 70% of married couples with men aged 15-24 had no living children in 1839, 64% of them had no living children in 1866, and the average number of children per family was 0.37 and 0.45 respectively.[97] This suggests that early motherhood in Palestine was characterized by either high infant mortality rates or low fertility (or both)—which were common explanations for low numbers of children in very young families and may have been exacerbated by factors such as poor health and nutrition. The same was true for Eastern European Jews, Jews from North Africa or West Asia, and Muslim populations, wherein early marriages still took place in the 19th century with puberty tending to mark the first permissible age for girls to marry.[98]

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[94] Ibid., 365.
[95] In addition to Schmelz, see Stampfer, *Families, Rabbis, and Education*, 23-25.
[96] Schmelz, "The Demography of Jerusalem Jews," 127.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid. However, more recent studies have concluded that in the case of Eastern European Jewry, child marriages were "exceedingly rare and limited to a special subgroup, the scholarly elites." See: Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia*, 52; Stampfer, "The Social Implications of Early Marriage," in *Families, Rabbis, and Education: Traditions in Jewish Society in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe*, 7-25; George P. Monger, *Marriage Customs of the World: An Encyclopedia of Dating Customs and Wedding Traditions*, 2nd Edition (Santa Barbara:

In late Ottoman Palestine, court documents demonstrate that a Muslim girl could be married at thirteen and then had the legal right to dissolve the marriage upon reaching the age of majority (i.e. the onset of her first menstruation) if she met a strict set of guidelines: she was legally married as a minor by a non-natural guardian (someone other than her father or paternal grandfather), made a public declaration of her menses to her husband and Muslim male witnesses, and did not engage in sexual activity with her husband after the declaration of intention to dissolve the marriage.[99] Officially, Islamic law in the Ottoman Empire did not shift away from early marriages until the early 20th century with the 1917 Ottoman Decree of Family Law, which both raised the minimum age of marriage without consent of a judge and a guardian to eighteen for boys and seventeen for girls and girls respectively and banned marriage for boys under the age of twelve and girls under the age of nine.[100]

Research suggests that the trend away from early marriage was also taking place in parts of Western and Eastern Europe in the 19th century. In Venice, the average age at first marriage among Jews was 25 years old, comparable to that of the women of the Catholic parishes (25.4 years old).[101] Much of early espousals (i.e., promises of marriage) in Europe were reserved for the upper classes, as the remaining population waited until their mid- to late-twenties to marry due to economic hardship.[102] Similarly, the average age at first marriage by the end of the 18th century in Britain and the United States was 26.4 years old for men and 24.9 years old for

ABC-CLIO, 2013), 11-13; and Mahmoud Yazbak, "Child Marriage: Ottoman Empire," *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, Vol. 3 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), 57-58.

[99] Yazbak, 386-387. It also worth noting that the age of sexual maturity (i.e. majority) could be as young as eight or nine for girls and twelve for boys. The typical age was twelve or thirteen for girls and thirteen or fourteen for boys, while fifteen was considered to be the maximum age of minority for both.

[100] Oğuzhan Tan, "Childhood and Child Marriage in Islamic Law [*İslam Hukukunda Ço- cukluk ve Çocuk Evliliği*]," *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi-Cumhuriyet Theology Journal* 22.2 (December 2018): 784-785. See also Judith E. Tucker, "Revisiting Reform: Women and the Ottoman Law of Family Rights, 1917," *The Arab Studies Journal* 4.2 (Fall 1996), 4-17.

[101] Derosas, 114.

[102] Monger, 11-13.

women—even though the minimum age for marriage in Britain remained 12 years old for girls and 14 years old for boys until an 1885 law raised the age of consent to 16 years old.[103] In Vilna and Korostyshev (Ukraine), marriage age for boys and girls corresponded with the local legal age of 16 years old and 18 years old respectively by the beginning of the 19th century.[104] Scholars have speculated, based on historians' and physicians' early writings in Palestine and Montefiore census data, that some awareness of the negative consequences of early marriage (e.g., failures to conceive, high infant mortality rates, producing "weaklings" with some form of physical or cognitive challenges, and increases in divorce rates) began to take root in these societies, resulting in the decline of the practice in the 19th and 20th centuries.[105]

As attitudes toward children and childhood developed throughout the 19th century, so too did perspectives on orphaned children and orphanhood. While Jewish attitudes toward children and orphaned children were anchored in sacred texts and filtered through rabbinic interpretive authority, shifting social norms, practices, and conditions influenced the global Jewish community's attention to the orphan problem and the social position of an orphaned child.

Modern Jewish Attitudes toward Orphanhood

Orphans, waifs, wards, foundlings, all comprised the nomenclature of what is essentially the poor childhood: one in which inherently vulnerable children find themselves in need of institutional care and support. Ostensibly defined by the absence of one or both parents, this dissertation argues that the modern Jewish orphan took on a central role in the imaginations of Jews and Jewish communities worldwide, as well as in the nation-building of Eretz Israel and the

[103] Ibid.
[104] Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia*, 52.
[105] Schmelz, "The Demography of Jerusalem Jews," 128-130. He cites the mid- to late-nineteenth century works of the historian H. Graetz and physicians B. Neumann, T. Tobler, Thomas Chaplin, A.M. Luncz, and A.L. Frankl.

mission to save the Jewish people both in Europe and Palestine. The confluence of 19th and 20th century child-saving American Progressive Era agendas and the very real existential crises of pogroms and wars elevated the status of Palestine's Jewish orphans in the eyes of the global (but primarily American) Jewish community. And this study shows that modern orphanhood was in fact an umbrella term for poor children in various housing situations, wherein institutional support of children in the Yishuv extended beyond the definition of an orphan lacking both parents to include all children in need of food, clothing, education, housing, health care, and skills training. More than children in need of care, disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children represented the remaining, fragile future of the Jewish people. The stakes therefore were high and support for them became a religious, moral imperative. In some cases, a Jewish community's security as a minority group depended, in part, on its ability to demonstrate support of disadvantaged and orphaned children. It also represented proof of one's commitment to Jewish continuity and concern for the global Jewish community. A brief overview of modern, Jewish attitudes toward orphanhood in Eastern Europe, Britain, the United States, and South Africa reveals which ideals and attitudes were shared among the communities, which were distinctive, and suggests which may have been imported into the developing child welfare systems in the Yishuv.

Eastern European

In Eastern Europe,[106] the Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskalah*) emerged alongside the social, cultural, and economic opportunities for integration seemingly brought on by the 18th

[106] Here, Eastern Europe refers to today's Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, the Baltic states and Finland, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, as defined by the geographical scope of the YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe. See: David Biale, "Childhood, Marriage, and the Family in the Eastern European Jewish Enlightenment," in *The Jewish Family: Myths and Reality*, ed. Steven M. Cohen and Paula E.

century European Enlightenment.[107] And its proponents (*maskilim*) paid attention to the treatment of children and childhood as one of their reformist issues. Maskilim, for example, viewed the institution of child marriage as "backwards" and unnecessarily shortening the important naïve period of adolescence and opportunity to learn and train for professions.[108] Maskilim also viewed the growing numbers of street children, who were mostly poor and orphaned, to be visible threats to the community's reputation—and hence, its political, social, and economic stability—in the eyes of local and national governing bodies. It was incumbent upon them, therefore, to solve the orphan problem in order to demonstrate their worthiness for emancipation.

Under the direction of the *kahal* (Jewish community council or decision-making body of a kehillah), disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children were largely grouped together for purposes of education, vocational training, meals, and ad hoc housing when it was not available from relatives. Jewish aid societies would arrange for a teacher to provide a basic Jewish education for the children, as they were often kept outside of a community's mainstream institutions. The societies were particularly keen on providing dowry assistance to ensure orphaned girls could find a future in marriage and apprenticeship placements for boys to learn a trade on the path to self-sufficiency.[109] Support from the kahal proved to be adequate until population growth and economic and political strife in the mid-19th century produced ever-

Hyman (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986), 45-61; Gershon D. Hundert, "Jewish Children and Childhood in Early Modern East-Central Europe," in *The Jewish Family: Metaphor and Memory*, ed. David Kraemer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Elisheva Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[107] For a complete overview of Haskalah and its iterations from Berlin to Galicia to the Russian Empire, see: Immanuel Etkes, "Haskalah," YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe (October 27, 2010), https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Haskalah (accessed January 31, 2021).

[108] See: Biale, "Childhood, Marriage, and the Family in the Eastern European Jewish Enlightenment," 45-61.

[109] See: Natan Meir, "From Communal Charity to National Welfare: Jewish Orphanages in Eastern Europe before and after World War I," *Eastern European Jewish Affairs* 39.1 (April 2009), 19–34.

growing numbers of disadvantaged and orphaned children in need of assistance. Particularly in the Russian Empire, disintegrating socioeconomic prospects and a growing Jewish population created a sense of unease among Jews under increased scrutiny by the authorities; disadvantaged and orphaned children on the streets threatened the Jews' safety and what remained of their stability, which provided concrete motivations to take care of the community's neediest children.[110] For a society under siege, the treatment of these children helped to determine the reputation of Eastern European Jewry as a whole, a community which was fighting against characterizations as "exploiters" and "unproductive." Disadvantaged and orphaned children thus were made to be objects of modernization: in need of being made into productive and moral citizens to reflect the health, morality, and productivity of the Jews in the eyes of the authorities and their non-Jewish neighbors.[111] Those in favor of modernization (i.e. the maskilim) viewed the establishment of effective systems of welfare for the marginalized in Jewish communities as an anticipated precondition for emancipation.[112] It was also in this shift that maskilim saw a window of opportunity for the role an orphan could play in Jewish society and as a tool for pushing a progressive agenda for change: "…orphans served as a useful template upon which the hopes (and fears) of Jews for the future could be superimposed…"[113] For Eastern European Jewry, the orphan became a measure of the health and worth of the community, so the responsibility for their care and the conditions in which they lived became central to communal life and survival.

[110] Meir, 21.
[111] Ibid. See also Scott Ury, "Urbanization, Community, and the Crisis of Modernity: Jewish Society in Turn-of-the-Century Warsaw," in *Barricades and Banners: The Revolution of 1905 and the Transformation of Warsaw Jewry* (Stanford University Press, 2012), 69-70.
[112] Ibid, 22.
[113] Meir, 23.

British

In Britain, attitudes toward orphaned children generally reflected the social anxieties of the modern, Western world: a repulsion toward the poor and pauperism and fear of the denigration of social mores.[114] For Britain's Jews, the arrival of Eastern European Jews following each outbreak of violence in the late 19th century and early 20th century represented an existential threat to their social standing, due to the perception of Eastern European Jews as less educated, too religious, poor, and less civilized.[115] Absent any social programs for skills training or access to enter the workforce, impoverished Eastern European Jews turned to charity and crime, which London's Jewish elite argued should be the responsibility of the authorities that allowed them in rather than the existing Jewish communities who were expected to rehabilitate and support them. Likewise, the steady influx of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children endangered the reputation and stability of London's Jewish communities, who feared they would be targeted for allowing the children to burden the surrounding communities and governing bodies.

Resistance to establishing new social services for the growing Ashkenazi Jewish population in London was pervasive due to the widespread fear that it would perpetuate unemployment and encourage increased, unwanted migration from Central and Eastern Europe. The long-established Sephardic community of London had its own hospital, asylum, and school, and it was comprised of a smaller proportion of families in need than in the Ashkenazi immigrant population. Proposals to either make existing social services available to the Ashkenazi

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[114] See: Edward S. Conway, "The Origins of the Jewish Orphanage," in *Transactions & Miscellanies (Jewish Historical Society of England)* 22 (1968-69), 53-66; Lawrence Cohen, *Care and Conflict: The Story of the Jewish Orphanage at Norwood* (Oxford: Peter Land, AG, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2014); Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society, 1880-1990* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[115] The fear of Eastern Jews (*Ostjuden*) similarly arose in German Jewish communities as Eastern European Jews sought refuge moving westward through the European continent.

immigrants or establish new, joint ones using shared funds were rejected by the Sephardic community who felt their money should support their brethren (Sephardic Jews) only.[116] This attitude is indicative of how Jewish communities organized themselves along ethnic, religious, linguistic, and national lines, and how they understood their relationship and responsibility to one another at this time. As the threats to Jews evolved from the local to the global, from the Eastern European poor to all Jews regardless of socioeconomic status or country of origin, so too did Jewish communities' sense of collective responsibility for the fate of Jewish communities outside of their own.

In London, the first attempt at a public (i.e. not exclusive to one community or another) Jewish welfare institution was the establishment of the Jews' Hospital in 1807, in order to care for the aged sick and to house and provide education and industrial employment for Jewish children. In order to deter families from Central and Eastern Europe en route to America from staying in London, the entry standards at the institution required them to be educated children (i.e. able to read English and Hebrew) of respectable parents who had been living in the United Kingdom for the last ten years and in London for the last two years. For orphaned children, they must have been living in UK for the last nine years and in London for two years. Thus, the purpose of the institution was not to house and educate impoverished children who lacked parental and familial support. Rather, the primary goal of the institution was to prove the worthiness of London's Jews for political emancipation by demonstrating both their roots in the country—hence the lengthy residency requirement—and their economic contribution to the country through the training of young Jews in skilled trades.[117] The children already predisposed

[116] Conway, 54.
[117] Ibid., 58. The idea of residency requirements as immigration deterrents was also adopted by Jewish charities who required aid recipients to be in London for six months before being eligible for support.

to succeed (ones with two, respectable parents, some education, and the financial stability to be a long-term resident of the UK and London) were propped up as examples of the positive role and contributions of London's Jews, while ignoring the needs of an ever-growing population of impoverished Ashkenazi Jews. Here too, the fate of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children was entangled with aspirations for political freedom and social status within a society.

As the interest of the Jews' Hospital's benefactors waned, discussions to make the institution more elite by rejecting the poorest Jews and instituting a strict entrance exam were put on hold as a reaction to an 1830 cholera outbreak that caused the deaths of some 5,000 Londoners. The public health crisis led to an influx of poor, orphaned children under the age of 10 (the youngest age of admission to the Jews' Hospital). In response to the immediate need to care for the youngest, Ashkenazi orphaned children, the Orphan Asylum was established in a house with seven children in 1831 and expanded to 40 children in 1846.[118] The parallel institutions in fact performed two distinct functions: The Jews' Hospital operated as an elite educational institution designed to elevate the Jews' reputation by training skilled workers and providing educational opportunities for the community's respectable families' children; the Orphan Asylum, as it expanded throughout the mid-1800s, served the needs of growing numbers of orphaned children ineligible for admission to the Jews' Hospital. The number of children in need quickly outpaced the space and resources of the Orphan Asylum, while the Jews' Hospital remained at half vacancy due to its stringent admissions requirements. When the two institutions finally merged in 1876 and adopted the controversial policy of accepting full orphans from Union schools[119] regardless of academic aptitude, the community's respectable children (for

[118] Ibid., 57.
[119] Conway describes how some orphaned or abandoned Jewish children were taken in by local, Christian schools, unbeknownst to Jewish community leaders, which resulted in both an initiative to repatriate some of the children to

whom the Jews' Hospital was established) were edged out. In response, it was proposed that there would be a cap on the number of orphaned children granted admission tuition-free, and the rest of the orphaned children would be placed out in foster homes.

The trajectory of the institution's admissions policies reflected the attitude that orphaned children ultimately should be the responsibility of individuals—not the community's and certainly not at the expense of educating children from families with good social standing. The assumption that children from poor families carried inherent negative qualities (e.g., lazy, criminal, uncivilized) that would preclude them from succeeding in the institution, and thus reflect poorly on the Jewish community, persisted. It was the first world war that ushered in a new era of child-saving efforts in the UK, nationalizing the movement and bringing orphaned children specifically to the forefront of the British imagination. Poor, disreputable parents' participation in the war effort changed welfare workers' perception of them as immoral or nurturing some personal failings leading to their reliance on charitable funds. This shift in attitudes toward the poor also contributed to the evolution of the orphan narrative, in which children now needed to be seen as abandoned or without a familial past in order to be worthy of support.[120] The Joint's and Hadassah's fundraising work for Jewish war orphans thus landed on fertile ground among British Jews, who felt the combination of a general responsibility to the future soldiers and workers of a Jewish national homeland and the hope for a Jewish future in Eretz Israel and elsewhere—an effort in which Jewish orphans, now the responsibility of child welfare institutions in the Yishuv, were key.

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the newly formed Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum as well as disbelief on part of the community that these children were Jewish.

[120] Lydia Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans: Poor Families, Child Welfare, and Contested Citizenship in London* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 143.

American

Orphanages in America were founded by members of religious groups to care for the dependent children in their own communities as well as proselytizing among the waves of new immigrants coming to America.[121] Catholic and Jewish communities reacted to both the growing needs of their destitute and orphaned children as well as the concern over the sectarian nature of the orphanage institutions established in their cities. Jewish communities were sensitive to the long history of missionary activity directed toward Jews, so the notion that thousands of Jewish children would be "lost to the Jewish fold" was a motivation to fund and establish Jewish orphanages.[122] The more affluent German Jewish leaders in the U.S. became founders of children's institutions and were influenced by European models. By the mid-19th century, Jewish orphanages in the U.S. were largely serving children of East European immigrants, most of whom were orphaned by one parent. Unconstrained by the pursuit of political emancipation or preservation of the minority group's social standing, some American Jewish orphanages operated as "critical vehicles for Americanizing the children of immigrants."[123] Rather than determining a child's upbringing or placement according to the parents' Jewish observance, the orphanages "instructed youngsters in American civic virtues, as well as in a *form of Judaism that managers believed would not conflict with the demands of American citizenship*."[124] To maximize the effectiveness of disseminating an "'ideal' synthesis of American and Jewish values," children were cut off from their immigrant parents—physically, culturally, and often linguistically. In this

[121] For more overviews of orphanages in America, see: Robert Bremner, *Children and Youth in America: A Documentary History*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); David Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1971); Nurith Zmora, *Orphanages Reconsidered: Child Care Institutions in Progressive Baltimore* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).
[122] Friedman, *These Are Our Children*, 4-5.
[123] Ibid., 9.
[124] Emphasis mine. Ibid.

way, the child-saving project for American Jewish orphanages was not intertwined with larger socializing or Americanizing initiatives for *all* new immigrants, but rather to save those Jewish children from the same fate (i.e. pauperism) as their deceased or destitute parents and from being educated in Christian institutions. This seems to have necessitated a compromise between the strict preservation of their Jewish upbringing and ease of integration into American society, which resulted in the dissemination of a diluted, yet palatable Jewish education to ostensibly safeguard the continuation of American Jewish communities and identities.

Other Jewish institutions like the Jewish Foster Home and Orphan Asylum in Philadelphia were established with strict parameters aimed at fostering Jewish education, identity, and practice, as well as becoming self-sufficient adults. Established in 1855, the Philadelphia institution reflected a set of core guiding principles that reveal other ways American Jewish communities viewed disadvantaged and orphaned children: "where orphans or the children of indigent Israelites may be rescued from the evils of ignorance and vice, comfortably provided for, instructed in moral and religious duties and thus prepared to become useful members of society."[125] Here, the instruction of Jewish moral and religious duties was a necessary precursor to good citizenship rather than a conflict of interest that needed to be resolved in order to uphold the primacy of Americanness. As such, the institution focused on preserving strict adherence to Jewish customs like Shabbat, wherein applications from a Jewish parent or relative who did not observe Shabbat themselves would be rejected.[126]

The diversity of the American Jewish landscape from Charleston to New York City coupled with the particular tensions between one's Jewishness and Americanness makes it

[125] S.M. Fleischman, *The History of the Jewish Foster Home and Orphan Asylum of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, Board of Managers of the Home: 1905), 12.
[126] Fleischman, 14.

difficult to pronounce any singular generalization about American Jewish attitudes towards orphanhood beyond the fact that communities shared the belief that the care of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children was the responsibility of the community and the consequences of turning one's back on this moral and religious duty were understood to be too great to do so.

South African

Like the situations in Eastern Europe and the UK, the demand to maintain charitable institutions and support new Jewish immigrants in South African Jewish communities was complicated by the existing communities' precarious social position as a minority group—despite the privileges of generally being considered part of the white class. Yet, an orphanage, the Cape Jewish Orphanage (known as Oranjia), was among the two dozen Jewish organizations established in Cape Town in the early 20th century.[127] Susan L. Tananbaum argues that Cape Town's Jewish elite organized charitable giving in order to improve their social position and help them fit into the larger class of South African white elites.[128] The influx of more conspicuous migrant groups of Jews (poorer, Yiddish-speaking, less educated, with traditional dress and customs, etc.) combined with the heightened sense of its minority status influenced South African Jewish institutions to promote Anglicization. The work of public childcare and education derived, in part, from a fear of the other—in the case of South Africa, fear of mixed race and Christian caregivers. The social function of rescuing the Jewish orphan was to bolster the communities' perceived whiteness, while also strengthening its minority status through an increase in the group's numbers. The racial and political context of South Africa may explain

[127] Susan L. Tananbaum, "From Local to International: Cape Town's Jewish Orphanage," *Jewish Historical Studies* 46 (2014): 81. This was not the first Jewish orphanage in South Africa, as the South African Jewish Orphanage was established eight years earlier in 1903.
[128] Tananbaum, 82.

why a unique feature of this story is the competition between the orphanages of Cape Town and Johannesburg: "Establishing Oranjia also provided a means for Cape Town's Jews to remind other Jewish communities, especially Johannesburg, of their importance and independence."[129] The competition may have been, in part, over money and Jewish souls, but also social status vis-à-vis *other* local Jewish communities.

The Cape Town orphanage sought to expand its facilities and succeeded in raising sufficient funding, which drew resentment and criticism from the struggling Johannesburg orphanage. The demand for more orphaned children in the larger facilities coincided with two important developments: the surge in Eastern European Jewish orphans after World War I and the subsequent turn of those communities to international charity to provide support for them. Isaac Ochberg, one of the two main fundraisers for the Cape Town orphanage extension project, received permission from South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts to bring 200 Jewish orphans from Eastern Europe to the Cape Town Orphanage. While scholars point to the well-known "Ochberg's Orphans" international rescue operation as evidence of the South African Jewish community's connectedness to their Eastern European kin,[130] one must also consider the context of a competition for prestige between Cape Town and Johannesburg to uncover South African Jewry's attitudes toward orphaned children and their role in society. Simply put, it is one thing to have to adapt and deal with immigrants coming into communities against the will of the existing members, and it is entirely another to voluntarily bring 200 Jewish orphans to a South African orphanage (as opposed to financially supporting them to stay in Eastern Europe or to immigrate

[129] Ibid., 83. The Jews' social status within the white class remained precarious because of antisemitism. This may have meant that intracommunal struggle for social status was a conflict over what was perceived to be a finite amount of acceptance and power available to Jews. This also is evident in the attempt to strike a balance between maintaining non-threatening population numbers and being the majority Jewish community amongst the various Jewish communities in South Africa.

[130] Ibid., 94. See also Jonathan Boiskin, "The Ochberg Orphans: An Episode in the History of the Cape Jewish Orphanage," *Jewish Affairs* (Winter 1994), 21-27.

to Eretz Israel). In fact, Jewish communities in South Africa were eventually split on prioritizing fundraising to bring orphans to South Africa or Palestine, a division that led to the dissolution of collaborative (and usually more lucrative) fundraising efforts. Those in the community who supported efforts to settle orphaned children in Palestine viewed child-saving as part of a larger Zionist pursuit of building up the Jewish homeland and increasing the chances of children growing up more fully immersed in Jewish life. They argued that both increasing antisemitism and the fact that South Africa was not (and would never be) a Jewish state positioned South Africa as a lesser choice on the holy mission of saving and raising the Jewish orphan.

The language of saving "pogrom orphans" was entrenched in notions of salvation and noble work, both of which are often reflections of the saver and their self-perception and personal and communal gains (in terms of respectability) from such work. The differentiation of pogrom orphans from other orphans likewise signaled a local community's connection to and participation in something larger than themselves, increasing the potential social capital to be gained. As far flung as Chicago, the international Jewish press reported how the cause of saving pogrom orphans—undoubtedly coupled with Ochberg's tenacity and charisma—garnered some £15,000 (equivalent in purchasing power of £739,119 or US$981,415.39 in 2020[131]) from Jewish communities throughout the Cape. The campaign culminated in a conference of delegates from South African Jewish communities who unanimously decided to use the money to bring 250 Jewish orphans from Ukraine.[132] Ochberg established relationships with various organizations, including the Federation of Ukrainian Jews, which facilitated his trip to Eastern Europe to

[131] As of the historical currency exchange rate on September 5, 2020.
[132] J.T.A., "Pogrom Orphans to be Brought to South Africa," *The Sentinel* (April 1, 1921), 29 [retrieved from the Historical Jewish Press (JPress) of the NLI and TAU]. In the end, Ochberg selected 167 Jewish orphans to bring to Johannesburg following a set of criteria: orphaned by both parents, under the age of 16, and displaying a willingness to relocate.

distribute food, clothing, and medicine the following year. Upon his return to South Africa, he published a detailed call to action in *The Sentinel* newspaper utilizing familiar values-signaling language: "it is our duty (as Jews) to support these cooperatives in order to put a stop to the begging system…"[133] He described the enormity of the crisis (the number of widows and pogrom orphans in the hundreds of thousands) and emphasized that the women would work any job to keep their children from going hungry—there simply were no positions to take.[134] Ochberg was careful to frame the hardship befallen Ukraine's Jews as the product of Russian policies towards them, rather than a personal shortcoming or desire to live off charity. As a fundraising strategy, the approach of combining a sense of duty and moral obligation with the stark description of their despair reflected a sense of responsibility for the health and survival of Jewish communities worldwide, with particular attention paid to disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children.

A Comparative Picture

This brief survey of modern Jewish attitudes toward poverty, charity, and orphanhood demonstrates how the fate of disadvantaged and orphaned children was entangled with aspirations for political freedom and social status within a given society. In Eastern Europe, the establishment of modern welfare systems, education and skills training for children, and the unique importance of permitting a time for childhood in the modern world, were all seen as preconditions for entry into post-Enlightenment society. Similarly in the UK, the primary goal of early Jewish welfare institutions was to prove the worthiness of London's Jews for political

[133] Isaac Ochberg, "The Jews in Ukraine," *The Sentinel* (July 27, 1923), 11 [retrieved from the Historical Jewish Press (JPress) of the NLI and TAU].
[134] Ibid.

emancipation by demonstrating both their roots in the country and their economic contribution to the country through the training of young Jews in skilled trades. In the U.S., unconstrained by the pursuit of political emancipation, some American Jewish orphanages emphasized the importance of preserving a Jewish religious tradition and identity that was compatible with American citizenship. Others viewed the instruction of Jewish moral and religious duties as the necessary precursor to good citizenship. Meanwhile, the threat of proselytizing and Jewish children being educated in Christian institutions touched Jewish communities around the globe to greater and lesser degrees. In each of these national contexts, orphans represented a measure of the worthiness of the Jewish community; a potential threat to the security of the community in view of its non-Jewish neighbors; an opportunity to increase a community's social capital; and a problem of global concern that resulted in Jews from outside of the communities in need working to solve it.

In Ottoman Palestine, Jewish orphanages developed along religious and ethnic lines reflecting a belief in placing children in institutions that reflected their family's religious preferences whenever possible. Child welfare leaders also discovered that institutional spaces (orphanages, schools, nursing stations, playgrounds) could be utilized as agents of socialization—not only for the children but also for their immigrant parents in a new national context wherein cultural norms and behaviors were evolving, rather than pre-existing. The socioeconomic conditions in Palestine differed greatly from those in America, Britain, and South Africa, which seems to have resulted in a distinct view as to whom is responsible for the care of orphaned children; rather than an emphasis on local responsibility and charity, Palestine's Jews turned outward, and the responsibility fell on global Jewish communities to support disadvantaged and orphaned children in the Holy Land. The conditions created as a result of the

outbreak of WWI provided the necessary context here for examining how modern attitudes toward Jewish orphanhood influenced several earlier attempts to care for Palestine's orphans and how they both persisted and evolved in response to the realities of daily life in the Yishuv.

Early Attempts at Orphan Care

Interest in Palestine grew in Europe and the U.S. during the second half of the 19th century, which brought missionaries, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, and diplomats to the region with a variety of motivations and goals; one of which was the conversion of Jewish children[135] to Christianity through the establishment of European-style schools that offered greater resources than existing Jewish educational opportunities, particularly for young girls who were largely excluded from formal education in Orthodox Jewish communities. Austrian and German diplomats sought to expand their influence and economic trade relationships in the region by Germanizing Jewish communities in Palestine through the establishment of German-language schools. As institutions were built by large endowments from wealthy individuals, school leaders and self-appointed committees determined which orphaned child's application would be accepted. The institutions always received more applications from families and widows than capacity allowed. The development of orphanages and group homes, and ideas for children's villages, grew at the end of the 19th century in response to increasing numbers of disadvantaged and orphaned children emerging from the local population in Ottoman Palestine and from the Russian Empire following the pogroms of the 1880s. Orthodox rabbis responded by creating urban institutions, first out of their personal residences in Jerusalem, and then later by renting

[135] As well as Muslim children throughout the Ottoman Empire. Missionary-run orphanages often served a majority Arab Christian population with few Muslim children who often did not stay long or would run away frequently. See Fruma Zachs, "Children in War Time: The First Pupils of the Syrian (Schneller) Orphanage in Jerusalem 1860-1863," *Middle Eastern Studies* 55.6 (2019): 958-973.

buildings funded by donations from abroad. In this kind of private institution, the system of placement remained at the discretion of the rabbi himself. It was not until after WWI when the Joint and Hadassah embarked on a mission to create permanent child welfare systems that disadvantaged and orphaned children could go through a centralized organization. Through their efforts, the system eventually placed children in homes and institutions in cities or rural children's villages and oversaw their financial support, medical care, living conditions, and attendance and progress in schools.

Prior to the transition from communal self-help in the form of informal foster care to institutional care and oversight in private homes, several efforts at solving the orphan problem occurred in Jerusalem. One of the methodological challenges in tracing the history of orphanhood is that the concept of what an orphanage was and how the institutions identified themselves were subject to evolving monikers to describe their facilities depending on their aims at a given time. Initially, it appears that the terms "school" or educational institution" or "boarding school" were preferred to distance itself from negative perceptions of charity vis a vis an orphanage that might have hampered fundraising efforts and long-term financial stability. School as a concept functioned as an ideological pursuit to educate or "civilize" children into productive citizens as part of a larger endeavor in Palestine by foreign governments. In other cases, the use of the term "orphanage" was employed to garner sympathies and extract greater sums of money to service the goal of rescuing Jewish children. Prior to the shift towards institutionalizing orphanhood, a few failed attempts to care for orphans began with the objective of education first and housing second. Meaning, only after a school was operational would housing the orphans—often in or adjacent to the school building—be adopted as a secondary function of the institution. The orphaned children who did not live in the so-called boarding

school were likely fostered in private homes of extended family or strangers, as the numbers of needy children had not yet outpaced that of available self-help solutions within a community.

One of the early efforts to care for orphans in the context of an educational institution originated within the German consul, which sought for years to open a German school dedicated to modernizing Jewish education in Eretz Israel in order to "productivize" Palestine's residents, as well as to further develop German influence and economic relationships in Jerusalem.[136] In 1872, German Professor Heinrich Graetz, a well-known historian of Jewish history, called for "additional aid in the field of education," in a pamphlet following his visit to Jerusalem.[137] Graetz's attention to the issue of education in Palestine resulted in the establishment of the Jewish "Orphanage" (school) in 1881—overseen by a committee in Germany—with an enrollment of just four children, which grew quickly to 65 children by 1887.[138] After the school was opened and students enrolled, it expanded to house 23 orphaned children in a building adjacent to the school. Children also attended vocational training in the workshops of the Alliance school.

Ashkenazi Jewish leaders protested the enrollment of Ashkenazi youths in the school because the language of instruction was German, including classes studying religious Jewish texts such as the Talmud.[139] Despite its aspirations to make inroads with local Jewish populations, enduring refusal of Orthodox Jewish leaders to send their children to modern schools and the rise of Jewish nationalist sentiments promoting the Hebrew language ultimately defeated the German Consul's attempts to Germanize the Jews of Ottoman Palestine. Efforts to

[136] Manneberg, 173.
[137] Kurt Grunwald, "Jewish Schools under Foreign Flags in Ottoman Palestine," in *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period*, edited by Moshe Ma'oz (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1975), 172. Graetz also expressed an interest in starting a foundation for an orphan asylum for Romanian Jews.
[138] According to Grunwald, a Dr. Herzberg managed the orphanage in Jerusalem, while Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Horowitz presided over the committee in Frankfurt on Main.
[139] Manneberg, 175-76.

save the school—then depleted by low enrollment and thus diminished funding—by way of unifying with the Diskin "school" (orphanage) never came to fruition. It finally folded into the Laemel school under Austrian diplomatic protection in April 1888.[140] Here too, the space of addressing the budding crisis over the care and education of Jewish children in Palestine functioned as an opportunity for foreign governments to execute their agendas in the region.

Another example of an official attempt to address the education and housing needs of Jerusalem's orphans was the Jewish women's society in Ottoman Palestine, *Ezrat Nashim* (lit. Court of Women), which opened a vocational school for girls and then later a "home for young girls" alongside the school.[141] In order to provide an alternative to parents who would otherwise abandon a child in the streets—and to keep Jewish children out of Christian missionary homes—Ezrat Nashim, however briefly, may have ignited the earliest notions of the importance of protecting young girls from child marriage, educating them to join the workforce, and maintaining an Orthodox Jewish identity and practice.[142] The consolidation and closure of both official and unofficial housing and educational institutions for disadvantaged and orphaned children was a seemingly common aspect of Ottoman Jewish life in the second half of the 19th century, of which little to no documentation remains.

Pre-WWI Orphanage Institutions

Following the devastating pogroms in the Russia Empire between 1881 and 1884, local Orthodox rabbis established four Jewish-run orphanage institutions, in addition to one medical institution that housed blind orphans: Diskin, Blumenthal, Weingarten, Institute for the Blind,

[140] Ibid., 172.
[141] Shilo, *Princess or Prisoner?*, 140.
[142] Ibid.

and the Sephardic Orphanage. The four privately-run Orthodox orphanages' official names varied over the years,[143] but they will be referred to here by their founder's namesakes for consistency purposes.

Those founders, namely Orthodox Jewish male rabbis, either transformed their existing homes into boarding houses for boys (initially) or raised enough capital to rent a building and establish an institution. Rabbi Yehoshua Yehuda Leib Diskin (1818-1898)—a leading rabbinic scholar, authority, and leader of the Lithuanian (non-Hasidic) community—established the first Jewish orphanage in Palestine, *Beit HaYetomim Diskin* (Diskin Orphans' Home), out of his private house in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1881. Diskin's house soon filled up with disadvantaged and orphaned boys living on the streets of the Old City and increasing numbers of orphans from abroad continued to arrive in Jerusalem. Rabbi Abraham Yochanan Blumenthal (1877-1966), a Jerusalem-born scion of an Orthodox family involved in various agricultural and institution-building efforts, then founded *Beit HaYetomim Tzion* (Zion Orphans' Home; but commonly referred to as the Blumenthal Orphanage) near the Bukharim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1900. To address the needs of disadvantaged and orphaned girls, Rabbi David Weingarten (1872-1940) established *Beit HaYetomim HaKlali shel Israel* (General Orphans' Home of Israel[144]) in 1902. A trio of Maskilic religious traditionalists, Chaim Michel Michlin (1867-1937), Rabbi Avraham Moshe Luntz (1854-1918), and Dr. Gershon Yitzchak Krishevsky (1868-1916) founded *Beit Chinukh Ivrim* (The Blind Institute—now the Jewish Institute for the Blind) in the Old City of Jerusalem in 1902 in order to provide

[143] The inconsistency of naming has both sinister and non-sinister explanations: in some cases, it was a simple issue of translation and terminology across several languages and cultures, notably Hebrew, English, German; in other cases, names were changed following a scandal—usually siphoning money and goods from the children or fundraising scams that either inflated the numbers of children or the existence of an institution at all—in an attempt to continue fundraising for the institution without the stigma of previous mismanagement.

[144] The institution also went by: General Orphanage for Girls, Weingarten Orphanage for Girls, United Jewish Orphan Home for Girls, and General Israel Orphan Home for Girls.

an opportunity for blind children, including orphans, to receive an education as well as vocational training. Finally, the Sephardic Orphanage, *Beit Chinukh Yetomim* (Orphans' Institute), was established in 1908 in order to meet the needs of Sephardic children in the city but was closed soon after the end of WWI due to a lack of funding.[145]

Since the institutions were neither systematically organized nor reported to any officials in those early years, data regarding the numbers and types of orphans under their care begins from 1918, when the Joint began overseeing and distributing funds to them.[146] In the first major report to the Joint on the conditions in Palestine after WWI, Hoofien indicated that some 2,500 Jewish orphans lived in Jerusalem, which represented 5% of the city's Jewish population.[147] The numbers are likely underreported—given subsequent reports of orphaned children numbering up to 4,500. But what the numbers do reveal is the extent to which the "orphan problem" permeated the city and demanded a more systemic solution; the sheer havoc wreaked on Jerusalem by the effects of WWI meant that the remaining Jewish households[148] in Jerusalem could not spatially, much less economically, meet the demands of the thousands of disadvantaged and orphaned children (not to mention those with widowed mothers) needing placements in private homes.

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[145] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #174.1, First Annual Report of the Palestine Orphan Committee, July 1, 1920, NY_AR1921_04301.pdf.

[146] The orphanages maintained internal records but resisted sharing them with the Joint or later with researchers. Correspondence between the private institutions and individuals and various philanthropic organizations and later governmental agencies was preserved in the latter's archives, which researchers in principle can access in order to gain greater insight into the workings of the private institutions.

[147] Population statistics from this time and prior under the Ottomans are both conflicting and scarce. Only Jews registered as Ottoman citizens were counted in Ottoman statistics, which left uncounted presumably thousands of non-citizen Jews who enjoyed protection under European consulates. See: Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine: Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and the Mandate* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1990). Another Joint report echoes these estimates, see: JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.

[148] McCarthy, 13. Reported by the Ottomans in 1872 to be 630 Jewish households in Jerusalem. It is reasonable to estimate that this number grew slightly along the trends of population increase through migration and births, accounting then for emigration and deaths from disease and WWI.

Table 1. Demographic breakdown of known, non-institutionalized orphans in Jerusalem[149]

Category	**Numbers**	**Percentages**
Ashkenazim	1153	45%
Sephardim	1417	55%
	2570	100%
Boys	1124	44%
Girls	1446	56%
	2570	100%
Aged 1 to 6	424	16%
Aged 6 to 11	923	36%
Aged 11 to 15	1078	42%
Aged 15 to 17	145	6%
	2570	100%
Both parents deceased	520	20%
Father deceased	1714	67%
Mother deceased, father absent	285	11%
Both parents absent	51	2%
	2570	100%

This sample reveals that there were more Sephardim than Ashkenazim, more girls than boys, and most of the children were aged 6-15. The division between true orphans (no living parents) and those with one living parent either present or absent (20% versus 80%) illuminates the complex nature of the orphan problem in Palestine. It exposes how the Jewish war orphan or pogrom orphan was more a symptom of poverty (exacerbated, to be sure, by violence, disease, and political strife) than a sudden, widespread phenomenon of Jewish children losing both parents. The orphanage institutions in fact educated and cared for children coming from a range of familial situations: from widowed or abandoned mothers to poor, immigrant families; overburdened families with more children than they can support to parents who were either

[149] Hoofien, *Report*, 50, Appendix A, https://lccn.loc.gov/19008388. These figures do not include the numbers breakdown for the Orthodox orphanages.

mentally or physically incapable of providing for their children. The situation in practice led to an expanded definition of an orphan, while utilizing the language of orphanhood—rather than general destitution—in order to maintain its appeal to foreign donors.

Meanwhile, in private Orthodox orphanages, the gender balance skewed predominantly male, more children with both parents deceased, and more children under the age of 10.

Table 2. Demographic breakdown in Orthodox orphanages[150]

Institution	**Age 5-10**	**Age 11-14**	**Over 14**	**Total by institution**
Blumenthal	103	44	3	150
Diskin	26	85	49	160
Beth Chinuch Yetomim	3	15	3	21
Weingarten	51	20	8	79
Total by age group	183	164	63	410
Orphan category	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Total by parental status**	
No father	29	150	179	
No mother	11	48	59	
Both parents	49	133	182	
Total by gender	89	331	420	Total children

There is no clear evidence for these differences between Orthodox orphanages and the sample presented in the Joint's report. One may suspect that rabbis were self-selecting for certain age groups, which resulted in Blumenthal housing mostly younger children, while Diskin's children skewed older. The disproportion of Ashkenazi and Sephardic children in orphanages may reflect fundraising capabilities rather than the needs or sizes of the respective populations; however, Sephardic communities were reported to have higher percentages of working adults overall. In both settings, children were more likely to have a deceased father than most other categories of

[150] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.

orphanhood. Outside of these institutions, hundreds and perhaps thousands of orphans lived uncounted in the historical record in other circumstances: in unrecognized orphanage homes where a rabbi or married couple did not request funds from American Jewish philanthropists; in the homes of various relatives; on the streets with no financial support; or did not survive the years following their arrival to Eretz Israel.

World War I

Toward the end of the late Ottoman period, World War I began to exacerbate already dire conditions for disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children in Palestine. Increased rates of starvation, disease, and unsanitary conditions brought about by poverty led to growing rates of infant and child mortality, which disproportionately affected poorer, more marginalized Jewish communities. The main culprit—typhus fever—not only decimated 2% of the child population, but also many adults, which resulted in "a great number of orphans" after the war.[151] Some 30% of the Jewish population also suffered from trachoma, while 60% showed signs of malarial intoxication in their blood work.[152] The outbreak of war cut off some 60,000 Jewish residents of Ottoman Palestine from its indispensable European and American donors. In response, U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Henry Morgenthau Sr. (1856-1946) sent a telegram to Jacob Schiff (1847-1920) on August 31, 1914, appealing for US$50,000 in aid for the Jewish community in Palestine. Schiff, a prominent American Jewish banker and philanthropist in New York, organized the funds and immediately wired the money. The worldwide Jewish need for financial relief during WWI prompted a consolidation of American Jewish relief organizations into a

[151] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.
[152] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1914-1918, Folder #122, Appendix Part I. Industries to be Revived, NY_AR1418_00634.pdf.

centralized Joint Distribution Committee of American Funds for the Relief of Jewish War Suffers (the Joint, also known as the JDC) in November 1914. The Joint then commissioned to deliver US$100,000 worth of food and medicine to Palestine through the U.S. government on the ship cruiser Vulcan, which proved vital to saving the entire community during the war years. By the end of WWI, the Joint spent over US$1.5 million in monetary aid, food, and medicine for Palestine's Jews,[153] and it continued to be one of the two primary benefactors (alongside Hadassah) of the development of Jewish child welfare systems through the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

The political environment in the Yishuv was also rapidly changing amidst the war and Zionist efforts to establish international support for the creation of a Jewish state. Turkish officials intervened in local Jewish affairs, particularly in the case of receiving relief funds from abroad, and the Joint office in New York City appointed a local committee to administer relief funds during the war. They encountered hostility when Turkish officials accused committee members of "obtaining money from American (sic) and using it for propaganda" and were forced to leave the country.[154] This intervention hindered attempts to establish consistent, centralized management of the funds on the ground. Another example was the Ottoman practice of intercepting cash sent from the U.S. and exchanging the dollars with Turkish bank notes before delivering the funds to local committees. This reduced the monetary value of the funds by a devastating 85%. Throughout the war, Jewish residents were compelled to provide food for Turkish soldiers operating in and around Jerusalem and other Jewish colonies.

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[153] "30 Years: The Story of the JDC," (USA: Litho, 1945), 10. See also Hoofien, *Report*, https://lccn.loc.gov/19008388.

[154] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Letter from Commissioner for Near East to Mr. Albert Lucas, December 9, 1919, NY_AR1921_00989.pdf, 4.

By the time British General Edmund Allenby conquered Ottoman Palestine during the 1917 Sinai and Palestine campaign, most of the young Jewish men in Palestine were drafted into the Turkish army or left to die of starvation in vulnerable areas like Safed and Tiberias where it was difficult for aid to reach.[155] Immediately following the capture of Beersheba on October 31, British Foreign Secretary Lord Arthur James Balfour affirmed Britain's support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" in a letter sent directly to the honorary president of the Zionist Federation in Britain, Lionel Walter Rothschild, on November 2.[156] Under more favorable regulations regarding immigration, land purchase, and institution-building, the Balfour Declaration permitted unprecedented access to the Yishuv, which dramatically improved the daily living conditions of its residents and expanded its opportunity to build permanent support networks as an alternative to temporary relief aid.

Indeed, the immediate needs of the ailing Jewish population were able to be addressed by the Joint through the Zionist Commission (ZC) once the obstacle of the Turkish government had been removed. The Joint was able to transfer a few hundred thousand American dollars directly, which was attributed to saving the remaining Jewish population in Palestine. Monthly and quarterly monetary transfers supported orphanages, the aged, rabbis and rabbinical students, yeshivot, Talmud Torah schools, loan funds, immigrants and refugees, hospitals and dispensaries, industrial workshops, wives of Turkish soldiers, an agricultural fund, soup kitchens, and the developing health bureau.[157] The transition from Ottoman control to the British Mandate powers ushered in new, influential leaders from American Jewish communities with significant

[155] Ibid.
[156] Rabinovich and Reinharz, *Israel in the Middle East*, 29.
[157] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Letter from Commissioner for Near East to Mr. Albert Lucas, December 9, 1919, NY_AR1921_00989.pdf.

financial backing. The next chapter will examine why it was American Jewish institutions and leaders that took responsibility for the rescue and care of orphaned Jewish children in Palestine and what ideologies and sensibilities they brought with them to disseminate to the thousands of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children suddenly in their care.

Chapter 2

The Jewish War Orphan: American Jewish Institution Building in the Yishuv

"*It is up to the women of Hadassah to stand, solidly behind this valuable and important work, which may not be as dazzling as the heroic deeds of our military, but build surely and earnestly for a finer human race*."[158] - Thelma Goldfarb, February 20, 1928

In April 1919, Felix Warburg, a Jewish, German-born banker and leader of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (the Joint or JDC), wrote to Cyrus Adler, founder of the Jewish Welfare Board, declaring that the care of some 3,000 orphans should be the responsibility of the Joint because it would be "a danger and a scandal to Judaism" otherwise. However, the maintenance of sewers, sanitation, and other public works improvements in Palestine should be the responsibility of either the British ruling authorities or Zionist organizations throughout the world, which "seem to have unlimited funds for purposes of organization and propaganda (and) should be made to realize their obligation toward the actual inhabitants of Palestine…"[159] On the surface, this indictment of the priorities held by Zionist leaders and their supporters highlights the deep schisms during the interwar period within Jewish communities over the future of a Jewish national home in Mandatory Palestine and how to realize its creation. But it also reveals how Jews and Jewish communities worldwide understood themselves to be responsible for the Jews of Palestine—a responsibility that was central to the evolving meaning of what it meant to be Jewish.

Following the consolidation of several Jewish philanthropic entities in the U.S. in response to the humanitarian crises set loose by the Great War, the Joint emerged from WWI

[158] Article for Infant Welfare Pamphlet by Mrs. Goldfarb, February 20, 1928, Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society, Collection # I-578, RG2 box 72 folder 1 (2 of 2) (2015-04-29 105452).pdf, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY.
[159] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Cyrus Adler to Felix Warburg, April 9, 1919, NY_AR1921_01261.pdf.

seeking to identify and address the most pressing challenges facing Jewish relief efforts. Europe was ravaged by war leaving millions of Jews displaced, unemployed, sick, and impoverished. In Palestine, the effects of being cut off from financial and material support during the war years were catastrophic on the local population, nearly all of whom relied on external financial support and found themselves at the far from tender wartime mercies of the Turks. An already substantial population of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children was augmented by an onslaught of migrant children escaping Europe as well as local children whose circumstances worsened due to poverty, dislocation, or the death of one or both parents from war and disease.

The extent of the so-called "Jewish war orphan" problem in Europe, Palestine, and the former Ottoman lands was revealed following a nine-month investigation led by the Joint, which resulted in Jewish leaders worldwide struggling to address a full agenda of competing priorities. This chapter will focus on the American Jewish role in building permanent child welfare systems in Palestine within the larger context of life under the British Mandate during the interwar period. Who was financially and organizationally responsible for Palestine's Jews? And for what elements of their communal and social lives? What role should American Jewry play in the development of Jewish communities in Palestine? How did American Jewish communities understand their relationship with Jews seeking refuge and the upbuilding of a Jewish national home in Eretz Israel? And what ideologies and sensibilities did American Jews bring with them to Palestine? In exploring these questions, I argue that the work of caring for and educating disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children in institutions created, alongside their other philanthropic involvements, an opportunity for American Jewish leaders to influence and shape what would become the new Israeli society and—crucially—that the distinctive features of the orphanage institution lent itself to maximizing their impact.

Hoofien's Relief Work

To determine the greatest needs of Jewish communities in Palestine after WWI and begin distributing relief aid to them, the Joint appointed Eliezer Siegfried Hoofien,[160] a Dutch-born banker and resident manager of the Anglo-Palestinian Bank in Jerusalem, as its distributing agent in Palestine. In his 152-page report to the Joint, he declared that "one of the *most difficult* and *costly* problems which Jerusalem relief work has been confronted with as a consequence of this war, is that of the orphans."[161] With that testament to the plight of Jewish war orphans, Hoofien drew serious attention to the specific needs of orphaned children in the Yishuv. A spike in mortality rates between 1915 and 1916 due to outbreaks of cholera and spotted fever meant that the numbers of orphaned children outpaced the capacity of either extended family members or existing orphanage institutions to sustain them, as both lacked the financial means to support additional children. As a result, a community's inability to care for its disadvantaged and orphaned children led to scandal—wherein Jewish children were dying on the streets of Jerusalem and the crisis drew even the attention of the Turkish authorities.[162] In urban settings, many families could hardly afford to support their own children, much less take in others, while the prevailing political conditions of the time prevented Hoofien from attempting to place children out in rural communities. From August 1917 to May 1918, Hoofien investigated the conditions of Palestine's Jewish communities while also working on the ground to bring shelter, food, and clothing to the children.

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[160] Hoofien immigrated to Palestine in 1912 after serving as director of the Cologne branch of the Zionist Central Office. See: Nathan Efrati, "Eliezer Siegfried Hoofien, director of the A.P.C.: his role within the Yishuv during World War I and its aftermath," in *Dutch Jewish History* Volume II: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands, December 1986. Ed.: J. Michman. Jerusalem: Institute for Research on Dutch Jewry, Hebrew University; Assen: Van Gorcum, (1989): 219–233.
[161] Emphasis mine. Hoofien, 33-34.
[162] Hoofien, 35.

With US$500,000 pledged[163] for distribution, he began his relief work by securing housing for orphans in Jerusalem and Haifa, assembling a committee in Jerusalem to identify families able to take in orphaned children, and regularly providing bread to Jerusalem's children through its schools and existing orphanage institutions. In the first three months, he distributed bread to 3,500 schoolchildren, and the number rose to 5,700 in the following months. Hoofien's bread distribution program serviced 75 schools and institutions, including girls' *hederot* (religious elementary schools) that were organized to bring destitute girls in off the streets.[164] While distributing bread to Orthodox Talmud Torah schools in Jerusalem, Hoofien discovered that the *melamdim* (teachers) were dying from starvation and disease. The situation was so pressing that Hoofien consulted with representatives of the schools and decided to implement a weekly stipend for all teachers to safeguard against the schools closing due to a sweeping loss of educators.[165] The motivation, according to Hoofien, to support the teachers was to ensure the welfare of *thousands* of schoolchildren who would be "thrown into the streets" and deprived of a daily education and meals should the teachers continue to suffer from extreme poverty-related conditions. Hoofien echoed what would become a common refrain in fundraising: That it was his moral, Jewish duty to prevent this from happening to the children.[166] Hoofien was likely also motivated to protect his own precarious position as a well-connected American who came to

[163] Hoofien complained in the report that he received only the first US$100,000 installment and was forced to take loans from the local bank to continue his relief work. See: Hoofien, 4, 11–12.
[164] Hoofien, 31–32. Educational facilities were previously unavailable to girls in the religious setting, so this marked an important step in providing equal support to poor girls who were between the need for an orphanage and being fully supported at home.
[165] According to a report, the Joint paid out 1,979.84 Egyptian Pounds (£E) to rabbis and *melamdim* in the month of June 1918. The figure dropped to £E1,408.73 in June 1919. See: JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Jerusalem Relief Department, June 1919, NY_AR1921_00913.pdf.
[166] Hoofien, 37.

Palestine with much-needed funds—a position resulting from the attention of Turkish authorities and local families urging him to address the dire situation.

From the outset, Hoofien's bread distribution program revealed how the physical space of an institution such as a school functioned as a medium through which support like bread, soup, and holiday items (such as boxes of matzah for Passover) could reach impoverished children otherwise living in private homes or on the street. Given the grim situation for all residents of Palestine, it is noteworthy that children were a first priority for relief aid: "As it could not hope to do enough for the whole city, it chose to do at least the best it could for those whose wants were greatest, and above all, whom it was *most important to preserve*, our children."[167] Knowledge of the outbreaks of violence and pogroms that were occurring in the Russian Empire and Eastern Europe for children and families must have reverberated as he witnessed the mounting crisis in Palestine. Indeed, while the "Jews of Palestine have always depended upon their co-religionists of Europe and America for support,"[168] the deteriorating conditions in Eastern Europe and Northern Asia for Jews amplified the urgency of the Zionist project in Palestine for some American Jewish philanthropists.[169] The response to Hoofien's report was to dispatch a follow-up mission to produce additional recommendations regarding the most efficient ways to organize and distribute relief funds under the British authorities.

At this time, Jewish relief work in Palestine was managed by a Special Relief Committee in Cairo led by Jack Mosseri (1884–1934),[170] who established the Jerusalem branch of the

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[167] Emphasis mine. Hoofien, 30.
[168] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Report to Albert Lucas, Executive Secretary of the Joint in NYC from Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum, Commissioner for Near East and Special Representative of the Joint Distribution Committee, December 9, 1919, NY_AR1921_00989.pdf.
[169] However, this was also the beginning of the splintering of the Joint's relief priorities between Europe and Palestine, especially as conditions grew more precarious with the rise to power in Germany of Adolf Hitler in 1933.
[170] Mosseri was a banker and member of an influential Sephardic Jewish family that settled in Egypt in the 18th century. See: Ruth Kimche, "Mosseri, Jack," in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, Executive Editor

Special Relief Committee led by Hoofien. In the aftermath of the British capture of Jerusalem, Cairo's Jewish communities organized the Special Relief Committee based in Cairo and then the subcommittee in Palestine to bring relief aid to Palestine's Jews. With efforts to organize relief aid from both American Jews and Egyptian Jews underway, Hampson Gary (1873–1952), an American diplomat and Consul General to Egypt 1918–1919, facilitated cooperation between both parties to help establish one centralized committee in Palestine.[171] In June 1918, the monthly budget for Jerusalem Jewish relief work was 8,851 Egyptian Pounds (£E), of which £E341 were designated for orphans and £E190 for orphanages. One year later, in June 1919, the monthly budget was £E8,163, of which £E2,935 went to orphans and £E492 went to orphanages.[172] While the monthly relief work budget decreased over the year, the allocations for orphans and orphanages substantially increased, reflecting a shift in priorities for relief work in Jerusalem. This illustrates how most orphaned children under their care at that time were subsidized in private homes as opposed to orphanages. The initial priority of these early relief efforts focused on identifying children in need and subsidizing them where they were, which was mostly in private homes due several factors including the limited capacities of existing orphanages.

The Joint's second fact-finding mission led by Solomon Lowenstein (1877–1942)—a veteran leader in American Jewish communal and social work and representative of the Joint in the summer of 1918—resulted in a 32-page report, which detailed the numbers of orphaned

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Norman A. Stillman (2010), https://bit.ly/3Sbhj0l. See also: JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from L. (Leon) Simon to the Zionist Commission, June 2, 1918, NY_AR1921_00847.pdf, which describes the ad hoc assembling of local committees to try to distribute aid more efficiently through the districts (Jerusalem, Jaffa, Hebron, and the Colonies).

[171] Hampson Gary, "The Agent and Consul General at Cairo (Gary) to the Secretary of State," in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, Supplement 2, The World War* (U.S. Department of State archives, File No. 763.72/11594, No. 112, Cairo, August 24, 1918), 562.

[172] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Jerusalem Relief Department, June 1919, NY_AR1921_00913.pdf.

children, their distribution throughout Jerusalem and the Colonies, and the related systems of relief and need throughout Palestine.[173] In response to the mission's findings that an estimated 4,500 orphans lived among a Jewish population of 56,000,[174] representing 8% of the Jewish population, the Joint established the Palestine Orphan Committee in 1919. With a mission statement that each child be cared for "kindly, wisely and with wholehearted regard for his individual needs and desires," the Committee was tasked with creating a child welfare system to address the needs of Palestine's disadvantaged and orphaned children. Under the leadership of Alice Seligsberg (1873–1940), an experienced American Jewish social worker and youth leader from New York, the Committee created a staff including 11 social workers, a nurse, nurse's assistant, and an office assistant. The increase in staff allowed them to expand the work of the Jerusalem office and hire social workers to operate outside of Jerusalem for the first time. Up until then, no one officially or regularly visited, oversaw, or maintained records of orphaned and disadvantaged children in other cities and villages. Seligsberg's experience overseeing Hadassah's pilot nursing program in Palestine since 1917 gave her the advantage of familiarity with the conditions and constraints on the ground. It also meant these American Jewish leaders brought with them the accepted wisdoms of American child welfare ideals, grounded in Progressive era values, which influenced their guiding principles on policies and placement decisions.

[173] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Letter from Commissioner for Near East to Mr. Albert Lucas, December 9, 1919, NY_AR1921_00989.pdf. For a brief biography of Lowenstein, see: JTA, "Solomon Lowenstein Dead; Mourned by All Leading Jewish Organizations," January 21, 1942, https://bit.ly/3cM7ju9.
[174] Weiner, 328. The Palestine Orphan Committee estimated the Jewish population at 60,000. See: JDC Archives, Records of the Jerusalem office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, file: Palestine, Child Care, 1920-1921, Alice Seligsberg, First Annual Report of the Palestine Orphan Committee, NY_AR1921_04301.pdf.

Indeed, Seligsberg came to Palestine with years of training, experience, and ground-breaking approaches to the fields of social work and child welfare. After graduating from Barnard College and completing graduate work at Columbia University and in Berlin, Germany, Seligsberg established a girls club on the Lower East Side of Manhattan followed by working at the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society (HSGS), one of several agencies that addressed the needs of destitute Jewish children in New York City. It was there that Seligsberg began to influence and fundamentally shift the direction of approaches to public childcare throughout the country: She advised HSGS to separate its boarding-out department from institutional control and instead report to the directors of the parent program—a move which experts say changed the course of the field.[175] Seligsberg then founded Fellowship House, an organization that serviced destitute and orphaned children for placements in homes or locating employment and served as president from 1913 to 1918. Seligsberg brought with her to Palestine years of hands-on experience addressing the individual needs of orphaned children, which in turn became a guiding principle of the Committee's work in deciding children's placements.

American Child Welfare Ideals and the Case of Palestine

While the shift in an American preference for foster care over the orphanage appeared to be solely a reaction to poorly-run, cold, stark institutions devoid of parental-like love for children, that perception of the orphanage in the U.S., and not only among Jews, was in fact part of a well-planned propaganda campaign executed in the wake of a surge in general interest in

[175] Marilyn J. Sladowsky, "Alice Lillie Seligsberg," *Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*, Jewish Women's Archive, December 31, 1999, https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/seligsberg-alice-lillie.

adoption.[176] This does not suggest that the public view[177] of the orphanage institution was inaccurate, but that ideals regarding the "best place" for disadvantaged or orphaned children—rather than being the product of a fixed ideological scheme—developed in reaction to realities on the ground: cases of father abandonment due to poverty, government insistence that such charity be the responsibility of private organizations, and a social willingness to support these children—as long as the support did not lead to pauperism. The outcry[178] to keep families together meant that "the orphanage, an embodiment to antebellum Americans of enlightened charity, had fallen decisively from favor with charity experts of the early twentieth century."[179]

Indeed, Americans and government officials became increasingly aware of and preoccupied by solving the problems of child neglect and child poverty in the U.S. In 1909, the White House Conference on Dependent Children convened a two-day meeting of academics, physicians, social workers, and community leaders to discuss the needs of America's disadvantaged and orphaned children. Conceived of by James West, a lawyer and presidential appointee inspired by his own institutional childhood, and led by President Theodore Roosevelt, the first of a series of conferences on child welfare led to the establishment of the Children's Bureau in 1912. The outcome of the conference was a preference for placing children in private

[176] For the full story, see Peter Fritzsche, "The Decline of the Orphanage and the Invention of Welfare," in *Building the Invisible Orphanage: A Prehistory of the American Welfare System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 7–36.
[177] The American public's view of orphanages was of course influenced by images portrayed in the news and popular culture of the time. For example, the Orphan Train movement beginning around 1853 and continuing into the early 1900s has become to be understood as the seed of the modern foster care system, in which over 120,000 destitute and orphaned children in New York City were placed throughout the Midwest under the impression that this approach would provide them opportunities and quality of life missing from the city's institutions. However, the movement was plagued with a lack of oversight and follow up with the children, which in turn facilitated abuse and neglect even on the bucolic farms of the rural Midwest.
[178] See "Philanthropy, Charities and Social Problems," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 17 (March 1901), 183-200; The National Conference of Jewish Social Service discussed the "vexing" problem of family desertion in 1901, see Charles Zunser, "Family Desertion (Report on a Study of 423 Cases)," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 145 (September 1929), 98-104.
[179] Fritzsche, 17.

homes rather than orphanages.[180] Then in 1919, the second meeting, convened by President Woodrow Wilson, established minimum guidelines on child health, labor, employment, welfare, and medical care for infants and mothers based on the input from social workers, pediatricians, public-health nurses, economists, judges, and parents. The public conversation on child welfare policies and governmental legislation of them in the U.S. empowered the dissemination of seemingly authoritative knowledge of best practices to the Yishuv.

A closer examination reveals more complex processes accounting for the policy shift from institutions to welfare systems favoring foster care: the religious domination of the orphanage institution. "So long as charity remained the business of religion, it could not be the business of American government. The religious neutralization of charity was to open the way for the development of an American welfare state."[181] The welfare itself had to change, which meant taking children out of institutions managed by religious organizations and putting them back into private homes, rather than a reimagining of the character of the orphanage itself. In the American case, both politics and social forces shifted the perception of "the best place for the child," to be in a private home.

The issue of religious neutralization of charity was not a challenge to the development of welfare systems and shifts in public opinion toward institutionalization in the Yishuv, despite the strikingly religious character of so many Yishuv-era child-care institutions. With early interventions to establish Jewish institutions for the care and education of children, the threat from religious groups outside of Judaism was an early and manageable challenge to overcome.

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[180] See: Marshall B. Jones, "Crisis of the American Orphanage, 1931-1940," *Social Service Review* 63.4 (1989): 613-629; Harold A. Jambor, "Theodore Dreiser, the 'Delineator' Magazine, and Dependent Children: A Background Note on the Calling of the 1909 White House Conference," *Social Service Review* 32.1 (1958): 33-40; White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, *Dependent and Neglected Children* (New York: Arno Press, 1974, c1933).
[181] Fritzsche, 35.

The religious character of orphanages was not understood as a social threat by American Jews; rather, the institutional space provided a venue for which it could be assured that children would be educated in Jewish religious traditions and practices, a fundamental goal of many of its stakeholders (philanthropists, social workers, rabbis, educators, donors, and lay people). However, debates among those philanthropists, social workers, and ultra-Orthodox rabbis over the Jewish character of each institution evolved to be intrareligious conflicts over Orthodox values, Ashkenazi and Sephardic differences, and whether Zionism should be a dominant influence over the institution's religious and cultural instruction.

In the U.S., since most of the children housed in orphanages (irrespective of religious affiliation) were not children orphaned by the deaths or abandonment of both parents—but rather children from destitute families, broken homes, and single-parent households—new ideas surfaced to redirect the money used to maintain children in orphanages to supporting children in the family home. This led to the creation of the mothers' pension, which was a state-run policy intended to "make it unnecessary for a destitute mother to send her children to an orphanage so that she could earn a living outside the home." [182] This approach did not work in the case of Palestine, as early attempts to shift from institutions to direct subsidies to parents and foster families did not yield the desired results; in fact, inspections of private homes revealed conditions to be worse than in the institutions. A confluence of factors led to this reality in Palestine. The social context of the early Yishuv often dictated an expectation that mothers would work to support their children, as Jewish communities generally sought to escape accusations of pauperism and a stereotype of an unwillingness to engage in physical labor. Yet, employment opportunities fell short of the demand created by scores of widows able and willing

[182] Fritzsche, 17.

to work. Poverty and disease were so widespread and severe that foster parents regularly used those subsidies to support their own families and not for the care of the foster child(ren). Skyrocketing inflation rates and wartime economic conditions rendered monthly payments less valuable and less able to cover the true cost of maintenance over time. Social workers could not as successfully enforce children's attendance in school or vocational training when they lived in a private home. And fundraising for individual children in homes was not a favored approach either by those raising the funds or those donating to this important cause. In short, the American understanding of the benefits of placing out children into family homes did not materialize in the case of Palestine. In fact, the opportunity presented by the construction of a loving, warm, communal institution to address those issues was more persuasive to social workers on the ground than the accepted wisdom of American child welfare experts at the time.

The decline of the orphanage in the American child welfare system was also part of a larger retreat from the era of the asylum in the 18th century: the poorhouse, reform schools, penitentiaries, insane asylums, and other residential facilities for people with needs. In its place, "an alternative repertoire of routines for coping with economically disadvantaged or socially irregular people" was established: probation, parole, foster homes, old age pensions, and welfare.[183] It is important to recall that American society's understanding of the difference between social deviance and special needs is sharper today—albeit still imperfect—than it was then. The American view that institutions separated people from society and created an artificial social environment—which had decidedly negative outcomes—did not find footing in Palestine. Rather, orphanages and children's villages in the Yishuv both reflected society at large and were largely not separate from it: Children under state support were educated in local schools, worked

[183] Fritzsche, 18.

in agricultural farms, apprenticed in urban workshops, and were seen as children *of* the society, not outside of it. The institution was seen as a tool for solving the problem of a growing population of disadvantaged and orphaned children, not as one perpetuating social ills. What accounts for this difference between America and the Yishuv is likely linked to several factors: Jewish communities throughout Europe and the Russian Empire long organized self-help institutions like orphanages to support the neediest within their communities, which were required to function autonomously from the majority populations; the Jewish character of an institution in Palestine was neither a threat to one's Jewish national identity nor social position as it was often in the U.S. (i.e. the threat of dual loyalty); and the stigma of poverty or abandonment seems to have penetrated Jewish communities in Palestine to a lesser extent than in the U.S. perhaps due to the oppressive conditions in Palestine for nearly all of its inhabitants.

However, crucial exports from American Progressive Era reforms to Palestine did include a shared belief in the centralized role of the child vis-à-vis society: "…it (America) was a society in which children were regarded as distinctly suited to embody the collective longings and moral aspirations of the age. In their unformed characters was the hope of national redemption and fulfillment. The gospel of 'child-saving' became the creed of Progressive reform."[184] More than just symbols of a certain type of social morality, children in the Yishuv were also actively and intimately involved in the upbuilding of the Jewish national home and Hebrew society. Whereas America "abandoned the orphanage in order to take up social engineering,"[185] the orphanage itself was an engine of social design in Palestine. In America, the orphanage institution was seen as counterintuitive to the child-saving movement and the centralization of the child in society; it was the source of the problem instead of the solution, reinforcing patterns of neglect. In

[184] Fritzsche, 8.
[185] Fritzsche, 20.

Palestine, the orphanage institution, with its own shortcomings, represented an opportunity to address the problem of housing and educating large numbers and sudden influxes of disadvantaged children quickly and more efficiently due to the established infrastructure and fundraising capabilities afforded by an institution. Meanwhile the principle of "Zionist maternalism," the notion that Jewish women "bore a specific responsibility" for social welfare, guided the early work in Palestine as an extension of the child-saving agenda.[186] This certainly went hand in hand with the general feminization of philanthropy in the U.S. In fact, infant welfare work was understood to be part of the "productive, modern, pioneering Zionist agenda."[187] In this way, institutions in the Yishuv did not threaten the aspirations of a particular vision for social cohesion, moral superiority, or national identity, but rather complemented Zionist values and supported the demand to address a problem whose solution surpassed the reach of the individual.

In short, the orphanage institution functioned differently in Palestine because the stakes were higher for Palestine's Jews and the challenges more complex: comingling with similar debates over charity, poverty, and pauperization were the distinctive existential threats of extermination and dispersion throughout the Jewish world. To save Jewish children from the streets of Palestine became a religious, and in some cases nationalist, mandate for Jews worldwide. And it was the magnitude of American charity—the "world's most generous private charity"[188]—that saved Palestine's Jewish communities and produced the conditions for a comprehensive public welfare system that would systematically replace branches of the child, health, and social welfare relief work managed by private philanthropists and assorted social

[186] Erica B. Simmons, *Hadassah and the Zionist Project* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 2-3.
[187] Simmons, *Hadassah and the Zionist Project*, 54.
[188] Fritzsche, 27.

workers. However, at the same time, unfavorable perceptions of charity, poverty, and pauperism needed to be overcome to both situate the plight of the children squarely in the American Jewish psyche and make material support in Palestine available to children from families of less desirable circumstances, such as widows, abandoned or single mothers, and parents with physical or mental conditions that made employment or caring for their children unmanageable.

Perceptions of Charity and Halukah Abuse in Palestine

Of Jerusalem's Jewish population in 1918—an estimated 25,000–26,000 residents—about 22,000 relied on some form of relief aid, including funds from the halukah systems. One of the many challenges to raising funds to support its disadvantaged and orphaned children was battling the perception of abuses of charity. While American philanthropists understood the "certain moral justifications originally…the abuses which have grown around the system seem to overweighted (sic) whatever moral value attached to it."[189] As a result of this view of widespread abuse of the charitable funds—largely based on high unemployment rates—a common response was to reduce financial support in an effort to encourage people to find work, no matter the unintended consequences. For the Palestine Orphan Committee, it was determined to be better to create financial hardship as a means of forcing people to work rather than to "spoil" them indefinitely. [190] An unintended consequence of such attitudes occurred when the Committee's quarterly budgets were incrementally reduced after the second half of 1919 until its dissolution in January 1924.

[189] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.
[190] Emphasis mine. JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Hoofien to the Joint, March 25, 1919, NY_AR1921_00858.pdf.

The notion that charity could be viewed as spoiling someone and inherently disincentivizing individuals from seeking employment or other means of self-support is of course not completely unfounded. While inevitably some recipients took advantage of charity—and even siphoned charity from children's institutions—many of the neediest did not have other avenues of support outside of halukah. In fact, many were often too ashamed to utilize the limited public charity established outside of halukah distributions: hesitancy to patronize soup kitchens and bread distributions sites, despite being hungry, for example. As a result, it was the existing stigma of this type of charity that eventually influenced the Joint's child welfare projects to better support the community as a whole. In one case, the Joint began distributing flour at the soup kitchens, so families could bake their own bread instead of waiting in a public line for it. It also established new initiatives to fund schools and workshops in all major Jewish communities to increase access to employment opportunities.

However, a contradictory attitude toward charity in Palestine surfaced time and time again, challenging the religious duty and general sympathy toward the poor: that only the direst (often meaning orphaned by both parents but also children from morally upstanding circumstances) cases should be considered worthy of support. This meant a subjective and ever evolving evaluation of individual children leading, in some instances, to broader accepted standards, and in others, a rejection of needy children based on a moral evaluation of their parent(s). In one case, the leadership committee overseeing a kitchen in Safed debated their responsibility to feed children with mothers, arguing that it was not "right or fair not to make those who have ways of helping themselves make an effort on their own part to carry the

responsibility toward their children."[191] This assessment echoed commonly-held suspicions toward the poor that their circumstances somehow reflected personal, moral failings of character, rather than a lack of available work, physical and mental hardships, or emotional trauma from abuse, neglect, and poverty. To raise adequate funds to establish permanent child welfare systems capable of supporting all of Palestine's disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children, the narrative needed to shift from charity as supporting adults unwilling to provide for their children to charity as an action to save Jewish children, and by extension the future of the Jewish people, from circumstances beyond anyone's control. As the initial custodian of child welfare work in Palestine, the Joint framed their mission with an eye toward the high stakes at hand for the Jewish people and implemented American child welfare ideals with a perhaps unexpected nimbleness for ideological change when the circumstances on the ground required it.

Orphan Care under the Joint

Leading up to the establishment of the Joint's Palestine Orphan Committee in July 1919, negotiations between Jewish organizations and leaders occurred, often in correspondence involving Alice Seligsberg, Norman Bentwich, Solomon Lowenstein, David de Sola Pool, David Eder, and Leon Simon, to define the limits and obligations of such a committee. At the time, Colonel Norman Bentwich (1883–1971), British barrister and delegate at several Zionist Congresses, served as the British-appointed attorney-general of Mandatory Palestine. Solomon Lowenstein (1877–1942), a Jewish-American rabbi, social worker, and philanthropist, served as a deputy commissioner of the American Red Cross in Palestine in 1918–1919. David de Sola

[191] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1921-1932, File 263, Letter from Miss Dushkin to Miss Berger, May 14, 1923, [1921-1932 Ny office file 263 (6 of 11) (2016-04-18 111815).pdf].

Pool (1885–1970), a British-born rabbi serving a congregation in New York City, took leave to carry out relief work in Palestine in 1919 for three years with the World Zionist Organization and the Joint, becoming the latter's Palestine representative. David Eder (1865–1936), a British psychoanalyst and physician, served as one of a handful of men who formed the Zionist Commission, [192] along with Leon Simon (1881–1965), a leading British Zionist intellectual who helped draft the Balfour Declaration.

The group's initial debates centered on whether the orphan work should fall under the jurisdiction of the Joint or the ZC, the former representing American Jewish relief work and the latter representing British Zionist interests and advising British authorities on matters related to the Jews in Mandatory Palestine. Seligsberg, the Committee's first leader, was adamant that any operational issues of the orphan work related to future national policy fall under the jurisdiction of the ZC, while all other decision-making processes be made at the discretion of the Committee. National policies regarding Hebrew language, admission of orphans from other countries, and transfer of orphans to other countries would be determined by the ZC and carried out in the work of the Committee. The objective of this separation of decision-making responsibilities was to ensure continuity between national and local priorities and to uphold the Zionist Commission's governing authority over Palestine's Jews. Seligsberg insisted the ZC remain the conduit for sending money to the Committee from overseas, while establishing the Committee's sole discretion over its own budget for orphan work in addition to its internal policies and expenditures.[193] This move to separate responsibilities over the work of the Palestine Orphan

[192] The Zionist Commission was established in March 1918 under the leadership of Chaim Weizmann, who was president of the British Zionist Federation at the time. The Commission established proto-government offices and departments in Jerusalem, which would later transition into the governing ministries of the State of Israel. See: JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1914-1918, Letter from L. (Leon) Simon to the Zionist Commission, June 2, 1918, NY_AR1921_00847.pdf.
[193] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Solomon S. Lowenstein, August 1, 1919, NY_AR1921_04172.pdf.

Committee also established a relationship between the two entities that resulted in an early interdependence between the success of caring for and educating Jewish children and the success of the upbuilding of a Jewish national home.

During the interwar period, the Joint provided financial support to children housed in private homes (a sort of informal foster care in some cases) and oversaw the education and medical care of thousands of additional children. Under the direction of Seligsberg, the Committee increased its staff of "home-visitors" (social workers) from six to eleven, to ensure each one would be responsible for no more than 100 households. This meant that each home-visitor needed to visit at least three homes per day, seven days per week to make monthly visits to the children under their care. The sole task of carrying out home visits throughout Jerusalem would have left little room for any other work. They were also equipped with the necessary skills to identify and treat potential issues (e.g., negligence, abuse, medical needs) before they became dire. Prior to the staffing changes in August 1919 following the creation of the Palestine Orphan Committee, home-visitors prioritized this excessive workload by only visiting the homes of full orphans. They were subsequently enabled to visit both full and half orphaned children, as well as take time to look after the wellbeing of some of the mothers, even if not on a consistent monthly basis.[194] When home-visitors reported cases of illnesses that they themselves could not "cope with, and which the ignorant Jerusalem mothers or foster-mothers neglected," it was clear that a nurse on staff was invaluable to the work of orphan care.[195] So, Seligsberg hired a nurse, Zlata Levy, formerly the assistant nurse in the Alexandria Refugees Encampment, to treat the children.

[194] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Mr. S. Lowenstein, August 4, 1919, NY_AR1921_04194.pdf.
[195] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Mr. S. Lowenstein, August 4, 1919, NY_AR1921_04194.pdf. These roles would expand under the direction of Hadassah and its resources and work being done in Palestine.

The Committee's finances in the first year, particularly at the beginning, also allowed for direct assistance to provide clothing, shoes, cots, bedding, textbooks, other school equipment, hot meals in schools, and improvements in the foster homes. Clothing and shoes were expensive to buy locally or abroad, so much of it came in by donation and in raw materials. The Committee enlisted mothers and foster mothers to sew clothing for their children by providing them with raw materials at home to contribute to this effort. Training in shoe repair was likewise an important industry among older boys to fill gaps in the import of donated material goods from abroad. These apprenticeships were organized by rabbis of orphanages, social workers, and relief workers to provide skills training for the older children in exchange for their labor. In addition to sewing workshops ran ad hoc by local skilled workers to help manufacture clothing for both orphaned and disadvantaged children, wives of community leaders also ran workshops for hundreds of girls and young women at a time with the financial support from fundraising abroad and later the Joint and Hadassah.[196] Jewish, Zionist, and foreign organizations also financed ad hoc workshops for skills training, but little of it at this time was consistent or sustained.

As a result, the Committee sought to systematize children's access to education and vocational training. Seligsberg hired a "school attendance officer" to visit the schools of all children supported by the Joint to collect information on their attendance, behavior, and progress each month. This information, which could be used to withdraw financial support from homes not in compliance with the standards of care and education, was transferred to the home-visitors to address any concerns or issues. The Committee also hired an "employment agent" to supervise

[196] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf. Mrs. Thon was Sarah Thon, a Galicia-born Zionist who immigrated to Palestine in 1907 with her husband Yaakov. She established five workshops for training and educating young women, as well as an agricultural training farm for girls next to the boys' training farm at the Kinneret. As a representative of the Women's Association for Cultural Work in Palestine, which was established by German Zionist women. For a brief biography, see https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/thon-sarah.

both boys and girls who reached the age of apprenticeship and secured positions throughout the city. In this work of supporting teenaged, orphaned youths on the path to self-sufficiency, the Committee paid monthly stipends directly to the youths, oversaw their employment conditions and relations with the employers, and enforced a mandatory evening school policy.[197] Given the expansive nature of activities undertaken by the Committee, one of the key guiding principles of the work was to move beyond emergency relief to establish permanent welfare systems—crucially, alongside, but also outside of the private family home.

Placement and Child Welfare Ideals

The evolving understandings of the best place for the child in the Yishuv was largely dependent on the conditions on the ground, how circumstances changed quickly, and thus how to adapt to a new set of information that determines what that best place was. The trajectory of these ideals was not a straight line from institutions to foster care, from foster care to children's villages, but rather more subtle adjustments considering new circumstances. For instance, the belief that the orphan problem was *temporary* steered the Committee away from building new orphanages at the outset of their work. Seligsberg's initial evaluation was that these crises conditions would not be a permanent feature of the developing Jewish national home, and therefore it would be a misuse of its limited funds to build or endow orphanages. The calculation of the time was such that an orphanage institution would pose a serious health risk in the face of epidemics and be difficult to manage and staff with quality caregivers. The Committee also faced the practical, on the ground challenges of a serious lack of existing infrastructure and buildings to rent, political will to raise the capital and secure the necessary support to build new structures,

[197] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Mr. S. Lowenstein, August 4, 1919, NY_AR1921_04194.pdf.

and certainly an initial glimpse into the intrareligious conflict over the placement of Jewish children in institutions reflecting a particular religious, ethnic, or political preference. Observing that the support of existing orphanages or the creation of new institutions to meet the demand of growing numbers of orphaned children was at the time deemed undesirable, the Committee hoped to remove 179 children housed in four existing orphanages who had living mothers as a starting point toward the shift away from institutions and support them in the family home.[198]

Since the Committee then sought to keep children either in relatives' homes or in a foster home, a financial model for support based on the individual child's circumstances was needed to optimize the limited financial resources at the Joint's disposal. The Committee debated whether to stretch the monthly stipend to support as many children as possible, albeit with insufficient amounts, or sufficiently support less children, often prioritizing full orphans to the exclusion of other needy children. This ideal and guiding principle too shifted based on whether children were in private homes or the existing institutions, decreases in quarterly and monthly budgets, increases in the number of children under their care, and observed evidence that the amounts were insufficient for basic standards of care. Initially, orphaned children received between £E1–3 (US$5–15) per month depending upon their classification and health: Fatherless children living with their mothers received £E1; fatherless and motherless children living in the private home of a relative or stranger received £E1.5; and infants placed in orphanages received £E3 per month. These standards were applied throughout Palestine to the orphaned Jewish children in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, Safed, Tiberias, and the Judean Colonies.[199] Soon enough, a raise in monthly

[198] Unmentioned, however, was consideration of the mental and physical state of the mothers, who may have sent the children to the orphanages for reasons beyond financial. See: JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.

[199] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Report to Albert Lucas from Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum, December 9, 1919, NY_AR1921_00989.pdf.

stipends was deemed crucial given the "wretched physical condition of the children," but the Committee could not be certain that the stipend increase would "be used by the mothers to supply the children with more and better food."[200] Echoing the Joint's ongoing, internal debate regarding the perceptions of charity abuse as well as the inadequate conditions of foster and family homes, single mothers were at times incentivized to improve the physical conditions of their children with monetary bonuses from the Liverpool Fund.[201] The Committee also supported children in group homes that managed 12–15 boys or girls at a time.[202]

Yet not all of Palestine's orphaned Jewish children were supported by the Committee. At the end of its first year, the Committee reported that 325 children lived in privately-run orphanages that had not merged with their work; 75 children living in Mikveh Israel; an estimated 1,400 "half-orphans" residing with living fathers; and an unknown number of women with many children whose husbands either abandoned them or are incapacitated and unable to work.[203] Orphaned children were taken in by institutions that were not overtly orphanages, such as Mikveh Israel (an agricultural boarding school) as well as an unnamed trade school for boys that took in 39 orphaned boys—both of which were supported by the Alliance Israélite Universelle.[204] Still many more hundreds of children existed in unofficial schools organized within Jewish groups, such as the discovery in the Boukhara Quarter of 400 boys and girls in a large building supervised by two or three teenaged girls and a few elderly Yiddish-speaking women. Numerous Talmud Torah schools and yeshivot enrolled thousands of children, as young

[200] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Mr. S. Lowenstein, August 4, 1919, NY_AR1921_04194.pdf.
[201] The Liverpool Fund appears to be a relief fund run by British Zionists supporting causes in Palestine and for soldiers after the war, but few references to it are found in historical newspapers.
[202] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #174.1, First Annual Report of the Palestine Orphan Committee, July 1, 1920, NY_AR1921_04301.pdf.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.

as age three, into overcrowded spaces and did not report to the Joint information about their support or care.[205]

In pursuit of suitable homes for their children, the Committee's ideal standards for foster care dictated that the private home should include both a husband and wife who incorporate the child(ren) in their households, and the husband is expected to work outside of the home to ensure that they do not rely solely on subsidies paid for the child(ren).[206] Placement decisions of orphaned children in foster homes also took into consideration the background of the children. Not only were social workers concerned about matching children with homes based upon their religious upbringing—children from religiously observant households generally should not be placed with less observant families—but also their socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. This guiding principle centered on children from a "superior" social status were privileged for placement in "homes of greater refinement than those to which most of the children (were) consigned."[207] Those families were given a higher monthly stipend for the children, which meant that the standard stipend seemingly based upon how much a child requires per month also took into account an understanding that a wealthier family should receive more money for the same child who otherwise has the same basic needs of children placed in homes of a lower socioeconomic standard. This privileged status afforded to an orphaned child from a higher socioeconomic background is reminiscent of attitudes toward the poor found in both American and British contexts: The children from "reputable" parents were deemed more worthy of charitable funds than those understood to be of less inherent value to the community. It also

[205] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.
[206] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Mr. S. Lowenstein, August 4, 1919, NY_AR1921_04194.pdf.
[207] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Mr. S. Lowenstein, August 4, 1919, NY_AR1921_04194.pdf.

echoed Talmudic and Halakhic discussion and debates over maintaining the prior standards of living for recipients of charity. Thus the Joint's approach ostensibly focused more on creating self-sufficient members of society, rather than pushing an overtly secularizing agenda on behalf of a particular movement's political or social agenda.

Given the extreme poverty and dwindled resources of prewar Palestine, not to mention interwar Palestine, these initial standards of placement in foster care perhaps unsurprisingly rendered only *four* such homes available to take in children in all of Jerusalem. This is a clear example of the rubber meets the road regarding the relationship between child welfare ideals and tangible capabilities on the ground. The reality of the lack of suitable foster homes influenced the Committee's ideological shift from emphasizing fostering to expanding existing orphanages and establishing new ones to accommodate the numbers of orphaned children within the first years of its work. However, the challenges of finite space for construction and real estate availability constrained such ideals regarding the expansion of existing institutions in Jerusalem. By way of example, the new Tushiyah orphanage opened in early 1919 by a Mr. Goldsmit (a Dutchman and longtime resident of Palestine), and it operated in a leased building—rendering its future uncertain, as improvements made would be without guarantee of a return in the investment. Two buildings on either side of Tushiyah were thought to be ideal for expanding the boy's orphanage, which also housed Helen Bentwich's ad hoc space for the temporary care of orphaned children suffering from skin and scalp diseases. Yet, expiring leases, tenants unwilling to move or be bought out, and the dearth of suitable foster families meant that demand pushed institution-building outside of Jerusalem to the rural colonies—not because of ideology, but out of necessity.[208]

[208] The Palestine Orphan Committee did not send home-visitors to areas outside of Jerusalem at the outset of their work, as Seligsberg was not tasked with officially performing child welfare outside of Jerusalem. Local

Looking beyond the overcrowded dwellings of Jerusalem, the Committee sought to place children outside in the Colonies (rural developments throughout areas that now fall on both sides of the Green Line) as the number of acceptable foster households there actually exceeded the number of local children needing homes. Social workers however faced several obstacles in attempting to place children in those communities: a relative who would deny permission for the child to leave Jerusalem, community-based objections that the Colonies were not sufficiently Orthodox, and residents in the rural communities themselves insisting on only accepting Ashkenazi children.[209] Much of these early sentiments toward orphaned children intensified as growing numbers of both Ashkenazi and Sephardic children arrived in Palestine. In other words, social workers worked with a number of evolving social, economic, religious, and ethnic considerations that varied widely based on locality, the individual, and the community. The Joint received pushback and input on its placements and allocation of funds from rabbis, religious communities, and groups organized along ethnic or political lines.

In addition to the observations of the realities on the ground and the responses to them, another critical obstacle arose: The Committee had no legal authority to either place or remove children from family homes, foster homes, or existing institutions. The Committee functioned akin to a non-profit foreign organization that managed charitable donations from abroad for a specific cause. They could not compel existing orphanages to take in or discharge children. In fact, directors of the four privately-run orphanages often refused or deflected Committee oversight when offered financial incentives and material goods in exchange for adhering to the

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schoolteachers in communities like Hebron, for example, were charged with distributing aid like shoes and clothing to orphaned children. In Jaffa, the orphanage served 75 orphaned boys and girls, while another 271 orphaned children lived outside the orphanage and were serviced by the city council. See: JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #174.1, First Annual Report of the Palestine Orphan Committee, July 1, 1920, NY_AR1921_04301.pdf.

[209] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Mr. S. Lowenstein, August 4, 1919, NY_AR1921_04194.pdf.

Committee's recommendations for improving the living conditions of the institutions. For the orphanages, discharging children meant a reduction in numbers that adversely affected its fundraising capabilities.

Ultimately, Seligsberg's assessment of the orphan problem as temporary proved incorrect in the short and medium term. From the interwar period through the establishment of the State of Israel, the number of orphaned and disadvantaged children swelled well beyond the capacity of existing orphanages and boarding out in foster homes and thus required larger-scale solutions to larger-scale influxes of children in need.

From Foster Care to Institutions

Beginning in July of 1919, the supervision of children in private homes occurred sporadically and in Jerusalem only. Only a select few of those children received clothing, schoolbooks, and condensed milk, as resources were diverted elsewhere throughout Jerusalem. Following an influx of several large cash transfers from the Zionist organization in Liverpool and the Joint during its first year, it was possible to first take steps to improve the support of children in private homes (deemed to be the ones suffering the most) as well as those outside of Jerusalem.[210] By July 1920, over 2,400 children in private homes in Jerusalem were supervised more regularly and supplied with clothing, schoolbooks, food, medical care (in coordination with the American Zionist Medical Unit), and special instruction as needed. Outside of Jerusalem, some 1,100 children received increased subsidies to help supply schoolbooks, food, clothing, better housing, and in some cases, a daily hot meal in Hebron, Jaffa, Petach Tikva, Rechovot and

[210] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #174.1, First Annual Report of the Palestine Orphan Committee, July 1, 1920, NY_AR1921_04301.pdf.

Gedera, Rishon LeZion, Nes Ziona, Chedera, Zichron Yaakov, Haifa, Tiberias, Safed, and Sidon.[211] Much of this initial support work was experimental in nature to gauge the effects of increases in financial support versus delivering goods and services directly—or a combination of both. Lessons learned may appear obvious: increases in monthly financial payments often led to more favorable outcomes for children, as measured by their health, school performance, and general well-being during home visits. But what Seligsberg also learned was that the level of financial support required to maintain these standards of individual support for an ever-increasing number of orphaned and disadvantaged children was unsustainable in the family or foster home; it required more sustained financial and human capital to sponsor and monitor children individually than in an institutional setting.

Seligsberg experimented with transitioning from individual foster care to institutional care with a group home setting for 15 boys whom she and her colleagues wanted to remove from inadequate homes. She imported the idea from Louis Levine, director of Hebrew Charities in Baltimore, and the opportunity to create the group home depended on one of the Committee's *shammashim* agreeing to take on the role.[212] The Committee found this arrangement to be successful and was able to replicate it in five other group homes with couples managing the homes. Due to the couples' dual employment—typically the woman as the matron and housekeeper of the home and the man earning a separate salary outside of the home—Seligsberg found the standards of living and care to be more acceptable than in private homes. The legality of such removals was still undetermined, but reports often indicated the children sought new

[211] Ibid.
[212] Seligsberg describes a *shammash* as part of a self-respecting guild of learned men whose roles may include doorkeeper, messenger, porter, and janitor.

placements away from private homes or orphanages and would simply run away to the Committee's Central Office in Jerusalem until their demand for reassignment was met.

In towns outside of Jerusalem, the local *Va'ad Ha'ir* (city council) was often tasked with overseeing orphaned children placed in private homes and small orphanage institutions to varying degrees of success. In Jaffa, the initial limited subsidies—£E95 for 222 children in private homes—reportedly made little difference. Meanwhile, the Jaffa Orphanage consisted of two buildings housing 75 boys and girls with no headmaster or married couple in charge. A few young girls and a "common-place" man (i.e. not a professional educator or caregiver) in charge of the religious education of the boys and religious observance appeared to run the institution, but the children "ran riot, wandering all over town."[213] By July 1920, with an increase in the payments to £E343 for 275 children in private homes, the Committee provided direct subsidies, clothing, and schoolbooks. The Committee allocated funds to hire directors and staff to support the children in the orphanage and in private homes, as well as paid the salaries of nurses and school supervisors. The Committee also financed housing improvements in institutions such as extensive cleaning and disinfecting, removal and replacement of beds, and installing showers and kitchens when the facilities lacked them. The orphanage was cleaned and refurbished, but ultimately relocated to another building due to a rat infestation.[214]

The uneven transitions in and out of foster, group, and institutional care reflected the Committee's attempts to adapt child welfare ideologies to both meet the practical needs of the Yishuv and react to the often-insurmountable constraints. These efforts are especially notable since American Jewish social workers came from the same circles advocating the abandonment

[213] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #174.1, First Annual Report of the Palestine Orphan Committee, July 1, 1920, NY_AR1921_04301.pdf.
[214] Ibid.

of institutional orphan care in America. Yet, the limitations of this kind of ad-hoc, sporadic support were evident through the interwar period, and the need to galvanize the public around the cause of saving Jewish war orphans in order to establish permanent solutions became paramount.

Ideals of the Central Office of the Committee

From the outset of its work, the Palestine Orphan Committee expressed its aim to "extend its influence in getting high standards of child-care wherever possible."[215] As such, the focus in the first year of the Committee's work was attending to the immediate relief of children living in private homes and getting much needed clothing and food into existing orphanage institutions. The Committee also supported children's medical needs through the Institute for the Blind and Bentwich's facility for temporary care of children with skin and scalp diseases. Support for other established orphanages waxed and waned due to their refusal to maintain the standards of care set forth by the Committee. Part of what explains this outcome is the fact that individuals housing orphaned children suffered from extreme poverty and relied on the subsidies for basic survival. In contrast, the established private Orthodox orphanages had fundraising strategies in place to collect donations from abroad on their own—funds and goods of which they were accused of siphoning off for their personal gain. It is evident that the work of child welfare in this environment was new and required a trial-and-error approach to determine how and where best to direct such limited goods and funds.

The Central Office also exercised ideological judgment in its hiring during the first year of operations. Seligsberg, as executive director, and Bentwich, as assistant to the executive director, brought on heads of other "stations" (i.e. towns such as Haifa, Jaffa, etc.) to manage the

[215] Ibid.

dispersal of funds and orphan work as well as support staff: a treasurer, bookkeeper, Hebrew secretary, special accountant, social workers, clerks, seamstresses, and other minor employees. The hiring policy for these positions gave preference, "other things being equal," to Palestinians—those who have resided in Palestine for many years.[216] Holding the positions of directors, social workers, clerks, secretaries, and nurses were four Americans, three Brits, one German, one Austrian, and 81 Palestinians (either by birth or long-time residence). Of the minor occupations like shammashim, seamstresses, and janitors, all 60 of them were Palestinians. The reported explanation was one of saving money on the cost of importing a significant number of professionals from the U.S., England, or Germany. Social work was not professionalized through local training and certification in Palestine until 1934, so the first home-visitors were either recent immigrants who trained in Europe or local citizens looking for work who learned on the job. It seems likely that there was a strategic interest in employing residents who both knew the physical and social landscape of Palestine and would accept lower wages in line with the local standards of living.[217] It also stands to reason that many long-time residents of Palestine were either raised in Europe or the U.S. or had parents who were, so a shared language (English) in the multilingual Yishuv and familiarity with Western culture was advantageous in executing the work.

Challenges after the First Year

To share experiences and define principles amongst those involved in child welfare work, the Committee convened the first regularly organized conference of "Jewish Social Workers in

[216] Ibid.
[217] Alice Seligsberg and later Henrietta Szold often requested increased wages, housing stipends, and travel expenditures for both business and personal travel. Perhaps the financial expectations of an American worker contributed to the hiring strategies put into place.

Palestine" in Jerusalem on June 15–20, 1920. Department heads from all towns and settlements, as well as anyone involved in their work, gathered for meetings over the six-day conference to produce two sets of questions, topics, policies, and guidelines for the practical and ideological aspects of the work conducted in institutions and in boarding-out children into private homes.

For institutions, attendees raised the following issues: principles regarding acceptance and discharge—whether to accept children with mothers; strategies to counteract what Progressive educational practice saw as the negative effects of institutionalization—whether to eliminate marching in line, silence during meals, entire control from above, encourage differentiation between older and younger children, encourage friendship, parties, clubs, and self-government; children's responsibilities for work in the household—how to manage supervision and idleness of children when kept at home; punishments and rewards—what are the most usual offences, what deprivations are resorted to, what should be rewards for good conduct; how to distinguish physical causes of perceived defects of character (e.g., bad eyesight or hearing, adenoids, bedwetting, inherited conditions); recordkeeping—the importance of gathering information regarding ancestry; and bringing disadvantaged and orphaned children housed in private homes into orphanage institutions for meals.

The challenges and questions of boarding out in private homes debated at the conference reflect some topics already touched upon in this study: Is it better to give a little help to many children or to give adequate help to fewer children? How can the work be improved within the present budget? Should the establishment of public kitchens be encouraged? How can the management of apprenticeships in workshops and contracts with employers be managed better? What is the distribution of responsibilities between the home-visitor and the nurse regarding the management of health, diet, hygiene, housing conditions, schooling, and play? What can the

home-visitor do to win the trust of the child? Should single or impoverished mothers be given an allowance to keep children in the family home? How does the Committee decide when to separate mothers and children as well as the separation of children from brothers, sisters, and other relatives? How should cooperation with orphanages and boarding out departments be managed?[218] These questions and more are covered in subsequent chapters and illuminate some of the greatest challenges and developments in the upbuilding of the Jewish national home and the place of children in society.

Relations with the British Mandate Government

Sir Herbert Samuel, the newly appointed British High Commissioner for Palestine, established an advisory council comprised of male leaders representing communities in Palestine (Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Bedouin, etc.) to participate in decision-making and government appointments for the new civil administration. Lady Beatrice Samuel and Helen Bentwich formed a women's council of representatives from the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian communities, including Henrietta Szold and Sophia Berger, to address issues of interest and promote cooperation and understanding among the women in Palestine. The High Commissioner's interest in resolving the Arab-Jewish conflict influenced the role of the advisory council, in which members could support or oppose measures brought to the new administration.[219]

[218] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #174.1, First Annual Report of the Palestine Orphan Committee, July 1, 1920, NY_AR1921_04301.pdf.

[219] In one case, a Bedouin sheikh rejected the proposal to allow women in Palestine to study law, and the bill was not passed. See: Devorah Hakohen, *To Repair a Broken World: The Life of Henrietta Szold, Founder of Hadassah* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), 188-190.

The executive director of the Palestine Orphan Committee, Alice Seligsberg, attempted to work with Sir Herbert Samuel on creating and passing laws needed to carry out certain aspects of the orphan work, since the Committee had no legal authority to assume responsibility for orphaned children or to remove children from private homes or institutions. The Committee encountered a variety of such circumstances where removal was deemed warranted including "an insane parent or guardian who exploit(s) the child, or from an institution against which there is evidence that it exploits its wards or neglects their physical and moral welfare."[220] In addition to seeking legal authority to remove children from homes within these parameters, the Committee requested assistance "to prosecute a parent or step-parent for non-support of a child, for example, in the cases of well-to-do men who have deserted their families but who can be located."[221] Since the Rabbinical Courts did not tend to hold the offending men accountable, the Committee sought British assistance in intervening in Jewish communal affairs related to the well-being of disadvantaged and orphaned children.

The Committee also took on the cause of child labor, which was not exclusive to orphaned or disadvantaged children under their care. The well-known practice at the time was for young girls, as early as seven, to be employed in domestic housework and young boys as assistants in various trades. In response, the Committee advocated for a compulsory education law to combat this widely-accepted social practice.[222] However, the High Commissioner pointed to both the lack of educational facilities in Palestine to accommodate all school-aged children and the need for improved economic conditions to garner social support for the termination of

[220] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #173.1, Letter to Rt. Hon. Sir Herbert, July 15, 1920, NY_AR1921_04016.pdf.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid.

child labor.[223] Finally, the Committee asked the British authorities to enforce Jewish practices—such as making Hebrew available as written and spoken communication and the observance of kashrut—in government-run institutions to accommodate all of its tax-paying citizens. Ultimately, issues such as the latter fell to the Committee to financially support, for example, by employing Hebrew instructors in British-run schools that enrolled Jewish children.[224]

Though attempts to legislate for their causes did not materialize at the time, other improvements under the British military government, such as the removal of obstacles to transferring and distributing large sums of money, facilitated the expansion of the Joint's activities.[225] Palestine could not yet support the development of industry, trade, transport, or construction, and the economic structure of Jerusalem remained dependent upon charity from abroad. Under these conditions, American Jewish philanthropists and social workers operated not only to relieve the dire circumstances of Palestine's poor, widowed, aged, sick, and orphaned children, but also to help reform its economy by establishing permanent welfare systems—in which vocational training, health care, and education were key. But by the end of 1920, the global economic strain demanded the Joint divide what dwindling funds it was able to collect between Palestine and Central and Eastern Europe, and ultimately it decided to reduce and then eliminate funds for Palestine by June 1921. The Committee appealed to the British government to accept financial and administrative responsibility of their "voluntary social service" projects,

[223] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #173.1, Extract of interview with High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, August 6, 1920, NY_AR1921_04021.pdf.
[224] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #174.1, First Annual Report of the Palestine Orphan Committee, July 1, 1920, NY_AR1921_04301.pdf
[225] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from Hoofien to the Joint office in NY, March 25, 1919, NY_AR1921_00858.pdf

including hygienic care of children in schools and orphanages.[226] The urgent call for financial support of the poor went unanswered. David de Sola Pool, regional director of the Joint in Palestine, reported that there was "nothing at all that the Government can take over from the direct relief work" they had been carrying out thus far.[227] De Sola Pool also sent an impassioned plea to the Joint's Paris office imploring them that "the lives of these three or four thousand children may not be wrecked by the stroke of the pen, unless all human aids fail us."[228] De Sola Pool's sentiments echoed familiar themes of child welfare work in Palestine: Even in the context of great suffering by the public at large, the fate of the children remained of greatest concern and consequence.

Jewish War Orphans from Europe and Palestine

In addition to the need for financial and material support, immigration continued to be a key issue facing the Jewish war orphan problem under the new British Mandate government in Palestine. The administration enacted a quota on Jewish immigration in 1920 allowing for the entrance of 16,500 heads of families and single people and an unrestricted number of persons able to demonstrate their financial ability to settle independently. It is estimated that tens of thousands of illegal entries occurred, despite occasional border closings due to riots throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and due to the tightening of immigration laws in the U.S. in 1921 and

[226] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #173.1, Letter to Sir Herbert Samuel from David de Sola Pool, December 15, 1920, NY_AR1921_04034.pdf.
[227] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #173.1, Letter to the Joint in NY from David de Sola Pool, January 6, 1921, NY_AR1921_04041.pdf.
[228] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #168.1, Letter to the Joint in Paris from David de Sola Pool, January 25, 1921, NY_AR1921_01372.pdf.

1924.[229] Orphaned children also appear to have immigrated outside of these restrictions at the request of well-connected Jewish philanthropists and individuals.

Until 1921, Jewish migration from Central and Eastern Europe was primarily directed toward North America. From 1907 to 1914, some 650,000 Jews arrived in the U.S. After WWI, the numbers declined significantly to 73,000.[230] The strict immigration quotas confined Jews hoping to migrate to the U.S. to remain in their Western European transit locations or to be redirected to Palestine. Meanwhile, post-WWI pogroms in Ukraine decimated an estimated 10% of the remaining Jewish population (roughly 150,000 people) which produced some 100,000 widows and 200,000 orphaned children by 1921—adding to the existing population of Jewish widows and orphans from WWI.[231]

It was at this time, under the constraints of the Joint's shrinking budget and swelling numbers of women and children in need, the distinction between war orphans from Palestine and Europe emerged in the Committee's fundraising strategies: the option of "adopting" a "Palestine War Orphan," for one year with a one-time payment of US$100. Depending on their age of admittance, the renewal of these financial adoptions was not guaranteed for the duration of an orphaned child's need to remain under the Joint's care, which contributed to the Committee's ongoing struggle to satisfy its budgetary needs. War orphans also found themselves subject to policies distinguishing among their circumstances and backgrounds to create differentiating tiers of support. For children orphaned by their fathers, financial support was available to widowed mothers for only one to two years until they could become self-supporting again. For fathers with

[229] Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine 1917-1948* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 80-89.
[230] Alfred Jacob Kutzik, *The Social Basis of American Jewish Philanthropy*, 645.
[231] Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jew: Under Tsars and Soviets* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), 221.

an orphaned child, support was issued in the form of a loan of six months' worth of support that was required to be paid back.[232]

Attitudes toward war orphans migrating from Europe and the Russia Empire (non-Palestinians) mirrored the threats felt in Britain and the U.S. by the existing Jewish populations toward new arrivals: "recent arrivals in Palestine whose parents died after coming here…whom the local community cannot support."[233] The distinction between orphaned children born in Palestine and immigrant orphaned children—or those who would become orphaned after arrival—had several social and economic implications. Fundraising for child welfare projects, orphaned children, and orphanages seems to have been targeted in such a way that appealed to specific American Jewish audiences and interests: namely, a personal connection to an individual orphaned child. Prior to organized relief work, Jewish immigrants to the U.S. were well-versed in the practice of "individual relief" or sending money back to friends and family in both Eastern Europe and Palestine. In fact, "individual relief and remittances were…a mark of the ethnic and diasporic ties of American Jews."[234] It was within this familiar framework of charitable giving that the Committee could tap into and adapt for Palestine's war orphans: to persuade American Jews that the war orphans were (or could be) their own children, their brothers and sisters, and most importantly, their responsibility. Thus, donors were more interested in "adopting" a child wherein they received a photograph, short biography, and even perhaps a thank you letter or additional communication from the child. This type of strategic fundraising allowed the donor to

[232] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1921-1932, File #263, Letter from Sophia Berger to S. (Solomon) Lowenstein, August 26, 1923, NY_AR21-32_00039a_01207.
[233] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1921-1932, File #263, Letter from Sophia Berger to the War Orphans' Bureau of the Joint, December 5, 1923, NY_AR21-32_00039a_01242.
[234] Jaclyn Granick, "Waging Relief: The Politics and Logistics of American Jewish War Relief in Europe and the Near East (1914-1918)," *First World War Studies* 5.1 (2014): 58.

feel more connected to the cause and experience the seemingly real product of their charitable giving. In other cases, the sponsorship of a child in an orphanage came with the promise of the child saying kaddish for the donor upon his death and for the years to follow thereafter. This approach targeted widowed or childless American Jews with the promise of someone carrying out religious rituals on their behalf after they died. American Jewish children donated their pennies and drafted pen pal letters to connect with Jewish war orphans in Palestine. American Jewish women established sewing circles to raise funds for the purchase of clothing or materials to sew them to meet the needs of Palestine's war orphans. Thus, with the case of the "Palestine War Orphan" as a fundraising tool, American Jews had the opportunity to both connect with those carrying out the mitzvah of living and praying in Eretz Israel, but also make a direct impact on the quality of their daily lives. Practically speaking, this meant that funds raised for Palestine's war orphans were restricted from being diverted to Jewish children and orphans arriving from abroad. This policy would evolve however with the influx of even more disadvantaged and orphaned children fleeing the Russian Empire, Europe, North Africa, and West Asia for Palestine in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s.[235]

In the waning months and years of the Joint's support for the Palestine Orphan Committee and its work in Palestine, financial and operational responsibility for the orphan work slowly transferred to Hadassah. The Joint already supported Hadassah's work when Henrietta Szold solicited financial support in 1917 for establishing the medical unit in Palestine at the end of WWI. The Joint contributed $100,000 of the estimated $450,000 needed. The first stage of the

[235] It is also important to note that Jewish children and families arriving from abroad were not exclusively coming from Eastern Europe and the Russia Empire, which is where the Joint began to fully pivot their work in the mid-1920s. In May 1923, Sophia Berger reported that most orphans not under the care of the Committee—because they were not Palestine War Orphans—were refugees from Anatolia fleeing pogroms with a widowed mother or grandparent. See: JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1921-1932, File #263, Letter from Sophia Berger to S. (Solomon) Lowenstein, May 18, 1923, NY_AR21-32_00039a_01205.

transition consisted of the Joint continuing to provide direct financial support for each registered child, while Hadassah delivered the material goods such as clothing, soap, toothbrushes, linens, towels, toys, etc. Additional private donors supported the disadvantaged and orphaned children under the care of the Committee in other realms as well, such as sponsoring youths' higher education costs.[236] The brief, but foundational, run of the Committee's work announced its official end on July 26, 1923, when the War Orphans Bureau of the Joint affirmed the move to dissolve the Palestine Orphan Committee in January 1924 asserting their "great obligations to the children in Europe."[237]

Orphan Care under Hadassah

On December 27, 1923, three women—Sophia Berger, Nellie Straus Mochenson, and Jessie Sampter—convened the first meeting of the Palestine Committee of Hadassah. Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America began as one of several groups of Zionist Jewish women meeting in New York City around the turn of the century to study topics in Jewish history, literature, Palestine, and Zionism. Henrietta Szold, the primary founder of the present-day organization, joined the Harlem group of women, the Hadassah Circle, in 1907.[238] Following Szold's 1909 trip to Ottoman Palestine with her mother—where she encountered the unsanitary and desperate conditions of the Yishuv—the group's mission shifted to engaging in health work for the residents of Palestine. Thirty-eight women subscribed as members at the founding

[236] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1921-1932, File #263, Letter from Sophia Berger to S. (Solomon) Lowenstein, January 4, 1924, NY_AR21-32_00039a_01245.
[237] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1921-1932, File #263, Letter from Augusta Kottler to Sophia Berger, July 26, 1923, NY_AR21-32_00039a_01218.
[238] Donald H. Miller, *A History of Hadassah, 1912-1935* (PhD dissertation, New York University, 1968), 43.

meeting of the Hadassah Chapter of a national organization, Daughters of Zion, at Temple Emanu-El in New York on Purim, February 24, 1912.[239]

Hadassah's leadership was dedicated to remaining outside the political strife that characterized Zionist movements internationally and maintaining financial and administrative control over their projects in Palestine. The organization began its mission to address the dire need for health services by sending two nurses, Rose Kaplan (of the Mount Sinai hospital) and Rachel Landy (of the Harlem Hospital Dispensary), to Palestine with Lina Straus in January 1913. Szold met the Straus' through Judah Magnes, and they were moved by her mission to finance the two nurses' work by paying for their salaries, housing, medicine supply, and equipment. Lina Straus rented an apartment in the Me'ah Shear'im neighborhood of Jerusalem to function as the nurses' living quarters and their medical clinic. Following the model of visiting nurses in the Henry Street Settlement of New York City, the nurses knocked on doors instead of waiting for patients to come to them, worked to ingratiate themselves with the neighborhood's residents, and fought against several social hurdles: namely, suspicion of their intentions and hesitancy toward adopting modern ways of medicine. The women were thought by the public to be at once Christian missionaries or Reform Jews seeking to influence Orthodox women, but importantly, a threat to the old midwife's tradition and folklore-based care women had been receiving.[240]

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[239] Marvin Lowenthal, *Henrietta Szold: Life and Letters* (New York: The Viking Press, 1942), 76. See also Devorah Hakohen, *To Repair a Broken World: The Life of Henrietta Szold, Founder of Hadassah* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021); Mira Katzburg-Yungman, *Hadassah: American Women Zionists and the Rebirth of Israel*, transl. Tammy Berkowitz (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012); Erica B. Simmons, *Hadassah and the Zionist Project* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006); Irving Fineman, *Woman of Valor: The Life of Henrietta Szold 1860-1945* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961); Joan Dash, *Summoned to Jerusalem: The Life of Henrietta Szold* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979); Baila Shargel, *Lost Love, The Untold Story of Henrietta Szold* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997).

[240] For more, see Hakohen, *To Repair a Broken World: The Life of Henrietta Szold, Founder of Hadassah*.

Hadassah's medical unit later arrived in Palestine during the final months of WWI and sent doctors, nurses, and dentists for visits to orphan homes.[241] Unlike the Joint, Hadassah was explicitly a Zionist organization whose purpose was "to promote Jewish institutions and enterprises in Palestine and to foster Zionist ideals in America."[242] Hadassah's public health and child welfare work was governed by the "practical work" [243] tenet of the American Progressive movement, which involved distributing formula to new mothers, setting up safe milk distribution stations (known as *Tipat Halav* or "Drop of Milk"), wellness checks on babies and mothers, and education programs for nutrition, hygiene, and modern medicine. Hadassah's mission to create a healthy society of workers and citizens in the Jewish national home also serviced non-Jewish mothers in Palestine. Helena Kagan, an Uzbekistan-born physician trained in Switzerland, arrived in Palestine and joined forces with Hadassah's nurses. Kagan learned Arabic and became a trusted doctor in Jerusalem through her pediatric care work for all sectors of Jerusalem: the Jews of the Old Yishuv, Arabs, Armenians, and other Christians.

Indeed, Hadassah embarked a more explicit ideological approach to their role as caregivers and health providers for Palestine's disadvantaged and orphaned children. "The Hadassah School of Nursing was based on the Nightingale model, which emphasized practical training, subordination to physicians, and strict discipline in boarding school conditions, in order to 'shape the students personality.'"[244] The addition of a mothering role to carrying out health care work reflected the notion that women's foremost contribution to the Zionist project

[241] Miller, *A History of Hadassah, 1912-1935*, 249.
[242] Preamble of the Constitution of Hadassah; Dafna Hirsch, "'Interpreters of Occident to the Awakening Orient': The Jewish Public Health Nurse in Mandate Palestine," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50.1 (2008): 236.
[243] Michael Brown, "Henrietta Szold's Progressive American Vision of the Yishuv," in *Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideas and Images of North American Jews*, Allon Gal, ed., (Jerusalem, 1996), 75.
[244] Hirsch, "'Interpreters of Occident to the Awakening Orient,'" 241.

consisted of bearing and raising healthy children.[245] By merging health care and child welfare projects under Hadassah, the organization could realize one of its overarching philosophies of "taking care of the Yishuv like a mother raising her children by providing for the health, education, and welfare of its people in general and of its children specifically."[246] In addition to the self-imposed mandate to mother the children of Palestine, Hadassah nurses mothered Palestine's women in best practices of taking care of their babies.

> The nurse in her home visits, actually bathes the baby, or boils the nipple, washes the bottle, dresses the baby, makes the gruel, or the broth, or whatever foods are ordered or makes the bed and arranges the baby, and very often calls in the neighbors to also see the demonstration, and this sometimes has to be repeated a few times to the same mother until she understands and learns. It is uphill work with some of the mothers, but gratifying when they finally admit that *our way is better*.[247]

Recent scholarship has cast a critical, feminist lens on the historiography of social work to argue that women reinforced gender roles, class discrimination, and violated principles of self-determination and multiculturalism.[248] Evidence of Western paternalism is clear in this example of how one of Hadassah's nurses described her interactions with educating mothers about proper hygiene and infant care and her perceived success when they *finally* came to see that *their way* was *better*. Through seemingly routine in-home nursing care, Hadassah actually worked to influence families' knowledge of medicine, nutrition, childcare, and basic manners and social norms to align with Western practices and Progressive values. The consequences (reinforcing

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[245] Hirsch, "'Interpreters of Occident to the Awakening Orient,'" 232.
[246] Mira Katzburg-Yungman, *Hadassah: American Women Zionists and the Rebirth of Israel*, transl. Tammy Berkowitz (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 54.
[247] B. (Bertha) Landsman, chief nurse, "Infant Welfare Work Done By Hadassah Medical Organization in Jerusalem," Written for H.M.O. Report to XIII Congress, Carlsbad, August 1923, Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society, Collection # I-578, RG2 box 72 folder 1, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, (1 of 2) (2015-04-28 164053).pdf. Emphasis mine.
[248] See: Ayana Halpern, "Jewish Social Workers in Mandatory Palestine: Between Submission and Subversion under Male Leadership," *Nashim* 35 (2019): 74-96.

gender roles, etc.) of this socializing work were secondary to the most important mandate of providing basic care and education of disadvantaged and orphaned children. The ideal of contributing to the health outcomes of children in the Jewish national home eclipsed modern feminist critiques due to the high stakes associated with the health of the children of the Yishuv: "Healthy babyhood is the first step toward strong manhood. With foresight and generosity we can help to build up a strong generation of men and women to serve the future of our land."[249] What scholars have rightly identified as a conflict between values and practice reflects the struggle presented throughout this study to walk the line between ideology and real conditions, in which carrying out the work to the detriment of upholding feminist, progressive values was privileged.

In short, American Jewish philanthropists who spearheaded efforts to address both immediate public health concerns and establish permanent medical and child welfare systems brought with them a combination of American Progressive sensibilities and Jewish and Zionist values to apply to the practical work of saving disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children from starvation, disease, and death. With these values and implored by a larger sense of purpose—that of saving Jewish children for the future of the Jewish people, but then to raise, educate, and produce the next generation of healthy, working citizens for the future success of a Jewish national home—American Jewish leaders and social workers sought to shape what that ideal future citizen would look like. The next two chapters explores the challenges of their work thematically and the confrontations they encountered among themselves, with the harsh and

[249] Hadassah fundraising letter from Mrs. S. Fleischer, founder of the Palestine Milk Station Fund, December 27, 1922, Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society, Collection # I-578, RG2 box 72 folder 2, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, (1 of 2) (2015-04-29 110813).pdf.

evolving circumstances on the ground, and with competing stakeholders vying for resources and children.

Chapter 3

'The Best Place for Any Child': Politics, Religion, and Money

"…in a way the orphan children are a privileged class in Palestine, but only privileged to those things that in America one considers necessities." - Jessie Sampter, May 11, 1923

The early work of child saving and supporting disadvantaged and orphaned children in the pre-WWI Yishuv was characterized by cooperation and leveraging money, relationships, and access, absent established legal frameworks to address some of the most extreme situations such as abandonment, neglect, abuse, and exploitation. Charitable funds raised in the U.S. and Europe and managed by institutions comprised most of the financial support for the Yishuv's institutions from schools to hospitals to orphanages. American Jewish leaders operated in Palestine with financial backing and political support from powerful Zionists and non-Zionists in the Jewish community and outside of it. Because of these precarious circumstances, those endeavoring to carry out child welfare work had to balance competing interests from institutions, individuals, and governments to maximize the impact of their limited resources to expand and improve childcare institutions. This chapter explores the controversies and challenges of institutionalizing childcare and welfare in Palestine led by American Jewish philanthropists and social workers in the immediate aftermath of WWI through the 1920s and 1930s who often clashed with each other, local leadership, and Orthodox rabbis over what it meant to be "the best place" for an orphaned or disadvantaged Jewish child. This included several points of tension, such as fundraising abroad, dispersal of funds, institutional oversight, and the placement of children, wherein ideals confronted the socioeconomic and political realities of the Yishuv. The lack of legal frameworks for issues related to fundraising and child welfare posed challenges for social workers when it came to centralizing fundraising efforts, deterring fraudulent financial practices,

reforming corrupted institutions, and removing children from neglectful homes or institutions. Ultimately, this chapter reveals how nimble American Jewish and Zionist leaders were when confronted with realities on the ground that challenged accepted wisdoms regarding child welfare (e.g. the importance of a private family home), and how those views on child welfare perhaps remained steadfast in word, but not necessarily in practice. In other words, the practical struggles did not permanently alter those ideals, but rather allowed for exceptions in practice to adapt to evolving conditions. In fact, the orphanage was in many ways an *ideal* place to raise children in Palestine because of its unmatched fundraising power, scalability, and centralizing power to oversee nearly all aspects of a child's life—all of which was tested by corruption and controversies in the Yishuv.

Post-WWI Jewish Communities in Palestine

Disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children were thrust into a complex matrix of communities in Palestine, many of whom fought over who was best suited to raise and educate Jewish children in Eretz Israel. The Jews of late 19th century and early 20th century Palestine were religiously, socially, economically, and politically quite diverse. In Jerusalem alone, the Jewish population was divided among 74 quarters or districts and 32 kolelim.[250]

> "It must not be forgotten that Jewish Jerusalem is in no sense an organized community. It is a congeries of almost non-communicating communities with different languages, interests, social and cultural standards. We doubt very much whether the Yiddish-speaking representatives of the Vaad Haashkenazi would take sweet counsel with the representatives of the Hebrew-speaking [left-leaning] Achduth [Ha-]Avoda[h], even whether they would sit together in the same room."[251]

[250] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1914-1918, File #122, Provisional Executive Committee for Zionist Affairs, Analytical Summary Report of Jewish Statistics of Jerusalem, March 1, 1918, NY_AR1418_00546.pdf.
[251] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from the Zionist Commission to the Joint, August 7, 1919, NY_AR1921_00934.pdf;

These ethnic, political and ideological lines defined political, social, and economic organization, which spanned from the existing, historic Sephardic Jewish population in Palestine to the migration and establishment of other Jewish communities beginning in the early 1800s: Ashkenazi (1812), Moroccan (1854), Cursic (Caucasus; 1865), Bohkaric (Central Asia; 1868), Yemenite (1881), and Urfalic (Urfa, Mesopotamia; 1904). By 1914, one tenth of Yemen's Jewish population (roughly 5,000 people) immigrated to Palestine and settled in Jerusalem and Jaffa—decades before the mass migrations following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.[252] The First and Second Alyiot of mainly Eastern European and Russian Jews shifted the majority population of Jews in Palestine from Sephardic to Ashkenazi by the beginning of WWI.[253] The Jewish orphan population reflected this diversity as well. Non-Ashkenazi orphans arrived from Aleppo, Anatolia, Baghdad, Bokhara, Caucasus, Damascus, Georgia, Kurdistan, Morocco, Persia, Salonica, Tunis, and Urpha. Yet as the population shifted to an Ashkenazi majority, so too the establishment of orphanages and the placement of children in foster homes often followed along ethnic, religious, and linguistic lines—not to mention the occasions in which class and social standing influenced placements and financial support. Most of the Jewish population of Jerusalem held Ottoman citizenship (5,320 heads of families), followed by Unspecified[254] (1,772), Austrian (860), Persian (590), and American (191). The informal census conducted from February to June of 1916 and published in a report in 1918 also revealed 5,271

"Outside of Jerusalem, relief is usually administered through local town committees. A central relief committee, composed of Palestinian Jews under the chairmanship of Dr. Thon, meets monthly to apportion the monthly appropriation in the towns of Jaffa, Haifa, Tiberias and Safed and the colonies."

[252] For more on the overlooked early history of Yemeni Jewish migration to Palestine, see Ari Ariel's intervention into the unsatisfactory Zionist narratives that have dominated this area of research for decades in his book *Jewish-Muslim Relations and Migration from Yemen to Palestine in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2014).

[253] Ruth Kark and Joseph B. Glass, "Eretz Israel/Palestine, 1800-1948," in *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, eds. Reeva Spector Simon, et al (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003): 335-346.

[254] This likely included the Russian Empire, as the remaining citizenships from the survey were German, Spanish, Greek, Bulgarian, Romanian, Italian, and "Various (Dutch) Danish, Brazilian, English."

heads of families were in fact women with a total of 9,881 children under their care.[255] The increasing numbers of widowed women and children orphaned by one or more parents was already underway during WWI and continued to increase in the aftermath of the war when soldiers did not return home, poverty and disease ravaged Palestine, and violence against Jews persisted in Europe and the Soviet Union.[256]

The diversity of the Jewish population as well as the large number of organizational divisions among the kolelim made the project of distributing aid to orphanage institutions and families all the more a complex affair. Negotiations for the distribution and management of relief aid were underway by August 1919 between the Zionist Commission's (ZC) Relief & Reconstruction Department in Jerusalem and the Joint Distribution Committee of (the American) Funds for Jewish War Sufferers (the Joint) in New York. The Joint understood Jerusalem's Jewish communities as organized along strictly political lines from the Orthodox to the "radicals;" however, the ZC's representatives viewed this as a fundamental misunderstanding of the communities' actual organizing principles which were along ethnic lines.[257] Indeed from the outset of its work, the Zionist Commission argued to the Joint that they should think about Palestine's Jewish communities in terms of ethnic, rather than political, diversity. When the Joint instructed the ZC to invite leaders from several political groups representing the extreme left and right to join a committee of the Relief Department tasked with managing the distribution of funds to communities and institutions (such as yeshivot, orphanages, schools), the Zionist

[255] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1914-1918, File #122, Provisional Executive Committee for Zionist Affairs, Analytical Summary Report of Jewish Statistics of Jerusalem, March 1, 1918, NY_AR1418_00546.pdf.
[256] Because these earlier migrations were not organized and reliable immigrant statistics generally are not available for the pre-WWI period, we do not have good numbers on war orphans, as distinguished from native-born orphans. Orphan numbers are limited to the organizations' self-reporting of children under their care, which also underestimates total orphan numbers.
[257] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from the Zionist Commission to the Joint, August 7, 1919, NY_AR1921_00934.pdf.

Commission urged that "a more justifiable basis of representation would be to invite representatives of the Ashkenazi, the Sephardi, Yemenite, Bokharian Jews, etc. For these groups do not over-lap (sic) nor are they politically partisan."[258] It is within this context that conflicts emerged not only among Jewish ethnic groups over the distribution of funds from abroad for their respective institutions and families, but also between American Jewish child welfare workers and the Orthodox rabbis and Old Yishuv leaders representing individuals' and institutions' interests. Zooming out from the local level, the regional context—relations between Jewish communities and the British Mandatory authorities—further illuminates the constraints under which Zionist organizations and American Jewish welfare workers and leaders established child welfare systems and adapted ideologies to meet the demands of the conditions on the ground.

Politics of Jewish Orphanhood

Under the British Mandate, the economic life of Palestine, and particularly Jerusalem, improved as employment opportunities with the military, police, and government became available.[259] By 1920, the British administration established trade routes with Europe, opened a branch of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank, and began to rehabilitate government hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics.[260] However, immigration laws impacting the arrival of orphaned Jewish children fluctuated throughout the 1920s; it was not until 1927 that a new immigrant category for orphans destined for institutions in Palestine was created.[261]

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[258] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from the Zionist Commission to the Joint, August 7, 1919, NY_AR1921_00934.pdf.
[259] Ruth Kark and Michael Oren-Nordheim, *Jerusalem and Its Environs: Quarters, Neighborhoods, Villages 1800-1948* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 139.
[260] Kark and Oren-Nordheim, *Jerusalem and Its Environs: Quarters, Neighborhoods, Villages 1800-1948*, 139.
[261] Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand*, 88. For more on the transition from Ottoman to British rule, see: Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem Between Ottoman and British Rule* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011).

The migration of Jewish children from Europe, the Soviet Union, North Africa, and West Asia accelerated during the interwar period and not only necessitated the expansion of child welfare but also tested the adaptability of the orphanage institutions and their leadership. Between 1919 and 1932, 15.2% (6,846 children) of immigrants to Palestine were between the ages of 0–14. Of that group, 52.8% were identified as male, representing a relatively even split in terms of biological sex. An additional 3.9% of immigrants were between the ages of 15–17. Compared to other migratory movements of the period, scholars have argued that the proportion of children (aged 0–14) was appreciably higher in Palestine's than in others.[262] In the 1920s, as immigration steadily rose, the British government required assurances from the local Zionist authorities and representatives of the American Jewish organizations to assume full responsibility of Jewish immigrants upon their arrival in Mandatory Palestine.[263] During this time, historians argue that the year 1925 was a pivotal turning point for Eastern European mass migration to Palestine due the United States' new immigration quotas.[264] And from the outset of Jewish children's and families' migration, British authorities made clear that Jewish communities alone were responsible for the care of dependent children.

With the influx of Jewish children needing institutional support, child welfare leaders soon recognized the lack of legal authority available to them to do their work (e.g., reforming corrupted institutions and removing children from neglectful homes or institutions). One of the existing institutions the Joint's Palestine Orphan Committee attempted to reform, Weingarten's Orphanage for Girls, illuminated the need for these laws through its misconduct. Alice

[262] Jacob Metzer, "Jewish immigration to Palestine in the long 1920s: An exploratory examination," *Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture* 27.2 (2008): 221-251.
[263] Miller, *A History of Hadassah, 1912-1935*, 43.
[264] See: Gur Alroey, *An Unpromising Land: Jewish Migration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 17.

Seligsberg, executive director of the Committee, documented the orphanage's infractions ranging from severe neglect and exploitation to fraudulent fundraising and misuse of funds. The girls were forced to embroider goods for sale without compensation, and they lacked adequate clothing, food, sanitary equipment, and linens. Forty single beds were supplied for 73 children, and nearly all suffered from a skin or scalp infection. The severe poverty that families experienced during WWI and in the immediate aftermath ultimately compelled some to admit children they could no longer sufficiently care for to the institution, and Weingarten's orphanage accepted these girls despite failing to demonstrate adequate care for those already in their charge.[265] While the Committee attempted to leverage its financial support for greater oversight and briefly took over the management of the institution, it was clear that the Committee required the intervention of the British Mandate government to pass the needed legislation in order to solve these systemic issues—a futile endeavor that fizzled out as quickly as it began.

Thus, legal action pursued regarding the status of an orphaned Jewish child came to the local British Mandate court and was decided on by a judge. If the right to place an orphaned child under the legal care of non-family member was called into question, the child's extended family members or prospective guardian would bring evidence to the court to attain custody. Such was the case of Alisa K., born on January 25, 1924, in the Hadassah Hospital in Haifa. Shortly after her birth on February 6, Alisa's mother, Leah, died from sepsis developed during childbirth. The child's father, Mosche, suffered from a heart condition and died of heart arrest soon thereafter on March 17, 1924. Alisa was taken into unofficial custody by Nellie Mochenson, who served in a variety of roles in the Yishuv as well as one of three founding

[265] JDC Archives, Records of the Jerusalem office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File # 173.1, Letter from A. L. Seligsburg to Mrs. Otis A. Glazebrook, July 16, 1920, NY_AR1921_04018.pdf. Glazebrook (Virgina Calvert Key nee Smith) was the wife of Otis, who was appointed by Woodrow Wilson to be the U.S. consul to Jerusalem serving from 1914 to 1920.

leaders of Hadassah's orphan work, in July of that year. Without any established legal frameworks to manage the responsibility of care for orphaned children at the time, a letter written by Alisa's maternal grandmother sufficed for the transfer of custody. She wrote that she and her husband were Alisa's only living relatives in Palestine, and they were unable to care for the infant. They acknowledged Nellie's role as guardian of the child and consented to Alisa's legal adoption by Nellie. The judge ruled in favor of Nellie's adoption request noting three key considerations: 1) whether he was "satisfied" that both parents were deceased; 2) that the parents of the child in question were "foreigners within the meaning of Art. 59 of the Palestine Order in Council;"[266] and 3) that the petitioning guardian is a "fit and proper person" to have custody over the child.[267] It is at first glance puzzling why the nationalities or citizenships of Alisa's parents would play a role in granting custody to Nellie, considering the next of kin had already approved of the adoption, and she was determined to be a suitable guardian. Perhaps, much like the Joint's consideration for placing disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children according to ethnic, national, and linguistic origins in homes and institutions, here too, Nellie's status as an American influenced the judge's decision to grant her custody, as it aligned with her deceased parents' statuses as either American or European.

Despite the relative economic improvement for Jerusalem Jewry, the developing child welfare system neither fully returned to implementing the ideal of private family care nor experienced a waning number of disadvantaged and orphaned children in need of institutional

[266] Article 59 of the Palestine Order in Council reads: "For the purpose of this part of the Order the expression 'foreigner' means any person who is a national or subject of a European or American State or of Japan, but shall not include: (i) Native inhabitants of a territory protected by or administered under a mandate granted to a European State. (ii) Ottoman subjects. (iii) Persons who have lost Ottoman nationality and have not acquired any other nationality." See: Moses Doukhan, ed. *Laws of Palestine, 1918-1925* (Tel-Aviv: L.M. Rotenberg—Law Publisher, 1934), 433-434.

[267] Correspondence about Nellie Mochenson, Central Zionist Archives, 1924-1933, A125\43, (2015-05-19 030805).pdf.

care to justify such a pivot. Rather, the numbers of orphaned Jewish children immigrating to Palestine continued to rise and children's villages, group housing, and new orphanage institutions continued to be conceived of in response to this reality. Because of the practical demand for larger-scale solutions, child welfare professionals also evolved in their understanding of what the orphanage institution was and what it could be in the sociopolitical context of both the Zionist aspirations for a future Jewish state and the existential crisis facing the Jewish people globally.

What is "The Best Place?"

In assessing both the practical and ideological challenges of addressing the surging orphan problem, the principles of the ideal environment for raising children—and specifically Jewish children—were central drivers to the performance of relief work. What did it mean to be "the best place for any child"? By the early 20th century, owing to Western developments in social work, social welfare, modern medicine, health and hygiene, the best place to raise a child generally meant in a private home that met the basic material needs for the child to survive such as sufficient shelter, clothing, bedding, food, and medical care. But in terms of ideology, it also evolved to emphasize a parent's responsibility for and investment in the child's development (e.g., age-appropriate recreation, education, parental engagement with the child, work and vocational training, and marriage). Broadly speaking, what that looked like varied and continues to vary across cultural, socioeconomic, and political contexts.[268] Not only did the role of parents

[268] For overviews of concepts of childhood in comparative and in global contexts, see: Peter N. Stearns, Childhood in World History (New York: Routledge, 2006); Heidi Morrison, *The Global History of Childhood Reader* (London: Routledge, 2012); Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2001); and Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (London: Longman, 1995).

and families evolve, but so too did the social position of the child. Viviana A. Zelizer's theoretical work examines the shift in the economic and sentimental value of children between the 1870s and 1930s to show how children became economically worthless but emotionally priceless.[269] For orphaned Jewish children, emotional pricelessness translated into the literal and symbolic future of the Jewish people and a Jewish national home. And in that social position, Zionist ideals of work, community, and the importance of time spent outdoors reflected the confluence of the economic value of educating and training the children for self-sufficiency as well as sentimentality and investment in children's early lives and well-being.

When it came to formally care for and educate the child, the best place in the Yishuv also meant Jewish. While concern over Jewish children in earlier decades was at times characterized by the fight against missionary activity[270] and its threat to Jewish communities scattered throughout the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, a great challenge confronting social workers in Mandatory Palestine was the ability to provide continuity of care and education with the aim of strengthening and preserving the next generation of the Jewish people. But the diversity of Jewish practices, politics, traditions, and communities also meant that just to be raised in a Jewish home or institution could have dozens of iterations. Much like the organizing principles of the greater Jewish population, placing disadvantaged and orphaned children seemed to follow national-linguistic lines first, as a basic factor of being with teachers and caregivers who speak their language of origin, while religious, ethnic, and often socioeconomic categories

[269] Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1985).
[270] See: Liora R. Halperin, "The Battle over Jewish Students in the Christian Missionary Schools of Mandate Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 50.5 (September 2014): 737-754; Arieh Bruce Saposnik, *Becoming Hebrew: The Creation of a Jewish National Culture in Ottoman Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Yaron Perry, *British Mission to the Jews in Nineteenth Century Palestine* (London: Frank Cass, 2003); Ruth Kark, "The Impact of Early Missionary Enterprises on Landscape and Identity Formation in Palestine, 1820-1914," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 15.2 (2004): 209-235.

followed. Similarly, some institutions were also self-organized along ethnic and religious lines, servicing a particular group like Sephardic Jewish children or children in the Boukharic quarter of the Old City. However, this approach alone in some ways represented child welfare values with an eye toward the past—a child's religious upbringing and country of origin as an organizing principle—while Zionist and American Jewish organizations also had an eye toward the future: traditional Judaism in practice and education, but also an insistence on Hebrew language learning and vocational training. In fact, the Committee frequently expressed its commitment to Jewish religious education regardless of political or social groupings: "We desire also to bring them up true to the tradition of Judaism, and it is as an earnest of that hope that we are laying to-day the foundation stone for a synagogue."[271] In this way, the orphanage institution provided Zionist and American Jewish leaders the opportunity to standardize most aspects of a child's upbringing and institute the values and ideals that would influence their development as citizens (the stones) of a modern nation-state (the synagogue). This was reflected in institutions providing training in agriculture, housework, sewing, cooking, and other trade skills to produce healthy, hard-working citizens for a Jewish national home. This nationalistic goals were inextricable from the humanitarian goals driving philanthropy.

In the interwar period, "the best place for any child" also evolved to mean under institutional care—in the children's village, orphanage institution, group housing, or other arrangement supported by family and non-family members. In fact, the debate over the best place for the child signaled a move toward the professionalization of parenthood, wherein adults were deemed less qualified (by way of poverty, too many children to provide for, mental illness, physical challenges, or differences in culture or education) to perform the responsibility of

[271] Letter to Herbert Samuel from the Palestine Orphan Committee, Central Zionist Archives, 1925, A255\722 1-4 (2015-01-11 060026).pdf.

educating and caring for the Jewish child. Having witnessed the difficult conditions of private homes in Palestine, both practical and ideological reasons drove American Jewish social workers and philanthropists to defy the commonly accepted wisdom of the time that children were not just better off—but *best off*—in private homes. And the project of civilizing and Hebraizing Jewish children and their families from all social, religious, economic, and political strata could not be done one child, one home at a time, and with only a focus on their basic needs: "…if the solid welfare of the younger growth in Palestine is to be secured, the Committee must look to the moral and intellectual as well as to the material sustenance of the children."[272] To be most effective and efficient in transmitting modern values of health care, nutrition, hygiene, and self-sufficiency, it was clear that the scope of child welfare work must be larger in scale and target thousands of children living and learning in settings operating on an institutional level.

The ideological shift in thinking toward a professionalization of parenthood was also reflected in attitudes toward Jewish children and families coming from North Africa or West Asia, who were at times deemed backwards, illiterate, and in need of being civilized. Part of that approach included targeting children from non-Ashkenazi families for specialized instruction in nutrition, health, and hygiene in schools. In some cases, children entered an orphanage institution to gain access to better education and care when parents were unable to provide for them. Similarly conceived of as children of criminals or vagrants in the United States in the early 20th century, disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children living or congregating in the streets were seen as needing to be rescued on moral grounds to both change the course of their lives and improve the prospect of their ability to become productive members of society.[273] Indeed, the

[272] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #168.1, Letter from Norman Bentwich to Mr. Lucas, August 16, 1920, NY_AR1921_01327.pdf.
[273] See: Matthew A. Crenson, *Building the Invisible Orphanage: A Prehistory of the American Welfare System* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998); John E. B. Myers, *Child Protection in America: Past, Present,*

orphanage was viewed generally as a mechanism to keep delinquent children off the streets, protect them from the bad influences and vices of urban life, and produce adults capable of working a trade to support themselves. The orphanage was therefore supposed to be an antidote to poverty. However, this traditional framing of the social problem of poor children and their families did not galvanize widespread financial support in Palestine; rather, when the orphan problem was framed in terms of a moral duty to save Jewish children from the streets and care for them as members of the Jewish people and for the good of the Jewish national home, greater traction among global Jewish communities was found.

American Jewish Financial and Material Support

Following Hoofien's 1918 report on conditions in Palestine, American Jewish communities were called to act on behalf of the disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children living in the Yishuv by appealing to their sense of responsibility for the welfare of Jews everywhere. Efforts were initially targeted at students in Jewish religious schools throughout the U.S., but these campaigns fell short of the Joint's expectations, resulting in Hadassah's intervention to supplement the annual budget.[274] American Jewish children donated their pennies, women sewed clothing and collected household goods for donation, and individuals and communities financially adopted individual orphaned Jewish children living in institutional care. Fundraising campaigns, particularly around Jewish holidays, aimed to address shortcomings in monthly budgets, provide for holiday-specific goods such as matzoth for Passover, as well as

and Future (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); LeRoy Ashby, *Saving the Waifs: Reformers and Dependent Children, 1890-1917* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984); Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood Since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1991).

[274] Correspondence about Nellie Mochenson, Central Zionist Archives, 1924-1933, A125\43, (2015-05-19 030805).pdf.

toward the establishment of additional institutions for disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children in the Yishuv.

In newspapers, journals, fundraising materials, and personal correspondence, it is evident that the care of the Jewish orphan was intended to be the responsibility of every Jewish person, mother, woman, child, and community. As early as June 1918, the work of Hadassah sewing circles was advertised in the Clubs and Societies section of *The Sentinel* newspaper. Organizing a social afternoon and asking for donations, the sewing circles would purchase materials to make clothing for the children of Palestine.[275] They were grassroots and self-organizing in nature to produce more than just clothing for the children: Women sewed hospital linens and garments, knitted bandages for trachoma care, baby layettes, simple dresses for women, underwear of all sizes and types, and assembled "comfort kits" for soldiers in the Jewish Legion.[276] By October 1918, the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) issued detailed instructions for the establishment of Palestine Sewing Circles: A chairwoman should be elected to liaise with the ZOA and organize and manage the process from materials gathering to delivering finished garments to the ZOA office in New York. While the ZOA encouraged the sewing circles to provide their own raw materials, patterns, etc., the organization seemed most in need of the physical labor, as they were willing to provide precut materials, patterns, and samples to those groups who needed them.[277] In fact, these detailed, bullet point lists describing the types of goods needed, what the ZOA is prepared to supply the women to carry out this voluntary labor, and what is expected of the circles as "affiliates" of the ZOA bore a striking contrast to the

[275] "Clubs and Societies," *The Sentinel*, June 14, 1918, 13 [retrieved from the Historical Jewish Press (JPress) of the NLI and TAU].
[276] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1914-1918, File #124, Directions for Palestine Sewing Circles, October 1, 1918, NY_AR1418_00872.pdf.
[277] Ibid.

overwrought pleas leaning hard on sentimental appeal to raise money for orphanage institutions. In this instance, it seems as though the act of donating money was treated as charity, while the act of donating labor was treated as an obligation.

In fact, women's voluntary labor was generally framed as a national, religious, and social responsibility to protect and support disadvantaged and orphaned children in Palestine. In an appeal to Hadassah members in 1923, Henrietta Szold asked American Jewish women to support the development of new initiatives—"cultural work"—as well as the "establishment of spiritual bonds between us and our sisters in Palestine."[278] Here, to do charity in and for the betterment of Eretz Israel went beyond the charitable impetus to deliver material support, but spoke to a larger notion of the desire to connect spiritually to Palestine's wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters—where the path toward that spiritual connection would be through charitable labor.

Moreover, ensuring the well-being of children in the Yishuv was not cast to the public as the responsibility of the government or elites, as was the case with other national projects developing in the Middle East and elsewhere.[279] Rather, in another campaign, it was the responsibility of Jewish children in America to donate their pennies and connect with their brothers and sisters in Eretz Israel. Hadassah launched the Luncheon Fund in 1923 to provide lunch for all schoolchildren in the Yishuv without making them feel like it was charity. By raising pennies from abroad for the budget, some measure of both equality and connection could be drawn: All parties, including children in Palestine, were pitching in equally by paying as little as a few pennies for the subsidized lunches to solve the problem of child hunger in the Yishuv. In American synagogues, funds for the lunch program were raised through both direct collection

[278] Correspondence about Nellie Mochenson, Central Zionist Archives, 1924-1933, A125\43, (2015-05-19 030805).pdf.
[279] See: Heidi Morrison, *Childhood and Colonial Modernity in Egypt* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

and through the sale of leaflets written by Hadassah leaders, like Jessie Sampter, who wrote descriptions of Palestinian life geared toward younger audiences.[280] Palestine's Jewish orphans and their daily lives were of keen interest to American Jewish communities, and fundraising materials reflected this through the 1920s and 1930s detailing personal characteristics and interests of the child, as well as promises to carry out mitzvoth in Eretz Israel on behalf of the adopter or benefactor. Yet, uncertainty over the ongoing capacity to raise funds for this project at times stunted its spread to more schools in the Old City, throughout Jerusalem, and the rest of Palestine.

Fundraising Abroad and Resulting Tensions at Home

The question of the best place for a child to be raised, whether under institutional or familial care, reflects also on issues of how money raised for the charitable cause was acquired and distributed, the competing interests of those running orphanage institutions, and the extent to which the Zionist and American Jewish organizations directing child welfare efforts should be involved in the oversight of them. In other words, how does one manage the allocation of charitable donations for a seemingly singular cause (saving Jewish children) to numerous and competing individuals and institutions while ensuring the money is being used appropriately and efficiently? Almost immediately following WWI, disputes rose over the disproportionate amount of funds raised from abroad versus from Jews living in Palestine to support "their" disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children. Often, members of the Palestine Orphan Committee lambasted the well-off in Palestine for abdicating their *duty* to contribute to the fundraising campaigns for

[280] Correspondence about Nellie Mochenson, Central Zionist Archives, 1924-1933, A125\43, (2015-05-19 030805).pdf.

orphaned children.[281] The problem was so overt that they instituted a policy of trying to persuade the well to do of Palestine of their responsibility to the community's poor.[282] The perceived reluctance to donate funds to support their own poor, orphaned, disabled, and elderly perhaps in part reflected a general social distaste on behalf of Jewish adults living in Palestine for pauperization as well as reinforced the perception that Palestine's Jews preferred to exploit and rely on charity, rather than lift themselves and then others out of poverty. It also shines light on the distinction between the responsibility for one's local community—often the preferred approach as American Jewish leaders assumed the needs of one's own community would be a more tangible and immediate motivation for local support—and the moral or religious duty of American Jewish communities to support all Jews everywhere. In fact, most Jews in Palestine were themselves suffering, starving, unemployed, and ill, and they could hardly be expected to spare money under these circumstances. Meanwhile, the motivation to support Jews in Palestine resulted from some American Jews being invested in the creation and success of the Zionist project—and certainly many concerned with the fate of Jews suffering from pogroms in Eastern Europe and from the harsh conditions of Palestine and former Ottoman lands. So perhaps calls for help resonated in the American Jewish communities in ways they simply did not in Palestine. But by strategically linking the fate of Palestine's Jewish war orphans, with the fate of the Jewish people more broadly, each contribution big or small, material or financial, had tangible effects on daily life in Palestine and offered a direct connection to Palestine's Jews.

[281] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.1, David de Sola Pool, The Work of the Joint Distribution Committee in Palestine, December 22, 1921, NY_AR1921_01148.pdf.
[282] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.1, David de Sola Pool, Palestine, General, 1920-1921, NY_AR1921_01185.pdf.

At the outset of the Zionist Commission's attempts to centralize fundraising abroad and distribution of funds at home, word spread among ethnic and religious communities of the ZC and the Joint's work resulting in frequent and repeated appeals for funds. In May 1920, the Boukarim community in Jerusalem appealed to the Zionist Commission for relief funds citing a sharp decline in their once valuable earnings and holdings back home in Russia. In fact, to further justify their deservedness of charitable funds, the community leaders cited two key characteristics of the Boukarim: They were wealthy and had up until then been not only able but willing to support their own poor; and owing to their religious duty in Eretz Israel to study and pray, they had not taken up any business since arriving.[283] However, in June 1918, the Committee had already loaned the group £E432, notably greater than the amount allotted for orphanages (£E190), orphans (£E341), and widows and deserted women (£E381).[284] The initial ad-hoc responses to queries likely resulted in the unequal distribution of funds—or at least the perception of it—whether intentional on behalf of the organizations attempting to centralize fundraising for all of the Yishuv's institutions and communities.

Many factions of ethnically and religiously organized groups as well as yeshivot and private Orthodox orphanages sought funding from Zionist and American Jewish organizations throughout the interwar period, and in the absence of sufficient financial support, individuals, groups, schools, orphanages, and institutions raised funds on their own by sending representatives to the U.S. to canvas Jewish synagogues and communities for donations. Representatives often produced falsified documents legitimizing their institution with forged endorsements from well-known individuals such as Zionist leaders or rabbis. They were also

[283] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Palestine, General, 1918-1919, NY_AR1921_00949.pdf.
[284] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Jerusalem Relief Department, June 1919, NY_AR1921_00913.pdf.

accused of inflating the numbers of children under their care to extract larger sums from donors and taking large portions of funds raised to offset the costs associated with traveling abroad to raise money in the first place. These tactics were more successful in the earlier years due to the decentralized nature of institutional life in the Yishuv, the fluidity of leadership and power over the nascent child welfare systems, and the historical structure and processes of the halukah system. After word spread in American Jewish communities about the rise in fraudulent fundraisers, individuals and synagogues would often write to the Joint's New York office to verify the legitimacy of the representatives who showed up on their doorsteps.

Management of Funds Raised

From the outset of the Palestine Orphan Committee's work through its second year in 1919, fundraising appeals to American Jewish communities and the Joint's central office in New York seemed to work and with the increase in the Committee's monthly budgets came the ability to direct more money to the insufficiently funded areas supporting disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children. In June 1918, £E341 were allocated for bread, wheat, rice, and cash distributed directly to disadvantaged and orphaned children through private homes and soup kitchens and £E190 for orphanage institutions. By June 1919, disadvantaged and orphaned children received £E2,945, while orphanage institutions' allotment increased to £E492.[285] Overall from January 1919 to June 1920, American Jews raised and distributed through the Joint just under US$2 million for Palestine.[286] Following the influx of relief funds, the Committee uncovered lists that

[285] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Jerusalem Relief Department, June 1919, NY_AR1921_00913.pdf.
[286] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.1, David de Sola Pool, The Work of the Joint Distribution Committee in Palestine, December 22, 1921, NY_AR1921_01148.pdf.

revealed many individuals who were not qualified to receive aid as well as allotments that were too small or too large.[287] To curb fraudulent fundraising and the improper acquisition of funds, the Zionist Commission pressured all relief agencies operating in and for Palestine, including the Joint in America and the Relief Fund in England, to concentrate their funds in one place: the Zionist Commission. The ZC also sought to establish the precedent that distributions of funds must go through the ZC and enforced by the British military authorities only, in addition to requests that the British military governors prevent fraudulent fundraising appeals from being sent abroad.[288]

More broadly, further reforms to the process of managing a list of some 7,000 recipients of aid came in the form of firing dishonest or "wavering" employees and discontinuing allotments to individuals or institutions according to the following criteria: financial support was found to no longer be needed, if money was found to be spent without "adequate returns," or not in accord with the Committee's "standards."[289] Previous recipients such as the Jewish Health Bureau, the Blumenthal Orphanage, the Weingarten Orphanage, the Mizrachi, the Haifa Real Estate Society, and the Joint's own Babies' Home and Home for Transient Orphans were among those who failed to meet the Committee's criteria for continued support. In other cases where an institution failed to meet the criteria, the Committee was permitted to intervene to improve an institution's facilities and operations to prevent the discontinuation of financial support. One such example were the Straus and Dreyfus soup kitchens in Jerusalem, which disadvantaged and orphaned children and families relied upon for free or low-cost meals and foodstuffs. In 1921,

[287] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.1, David de Sola Pool, Palestine, General, 1920-1921, NY_AR1921_01185.pdf.
[288] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder: Palestine, General, 1918-1919, Report from the Relief Department of the Zionist Commission to Palestine, June 2, 1918, NY_AR1921_00847.pdf.
[289] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.1, David de Sola Pool, Palestine, General, 1920-1921, NY_AR1921_01185.pdf.

the Committee reported that it had fired dishonest or inefficient workers, reorganized the staff, and closely analyzed the list of needy recipients for accuracy.[290] The reduction of waste and corruption resulted in higher quality meals for more people at an overall lower cost to the Committee. Perhaps at the time, the intervention in the soup kitchens owed its success to the fact that oversight of the distribution of food carried less of a political or religious threat than the prospect of an outsider managing orphanages or religious schools.

But the Joint did continue to financially support yeshivot and Talmud Torah schools without controlling them, and despite the lack of transparency on part of the religious institutions in reporting their finances to the Joint to determine their true level of need in relation to budget, expenditures, and other sources of support.[291] In 1919, an effort to subvert the institutions' obstructionist approach and avoid punishing the students who demonstrated to be in need of financial support was a policy of increasing aid to the "distinguished students (*Mezuianim*)." By focusing on supporting the top yeshiva pupils and decreasing the allotments for the rest, the Committee sought to discourage the men from continuing in "wasting their time in non-productive study."[292] The Joint recognized the inevitable repercussions of this policy of increasing the number of unemployed Jewish men outside of the yeshiva framework for which no work could be found in Jerusalem or elsewhere. It also begs the question of who determined the distinguished students from the rest when the yeshivot were not incentivized to be complicit in a policy that threatened to reduce their total number of pupils—real or inflated, it was a significant measure of their fundraising power. And perhaps owing to the real sense of

[290] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.1, David de Sola Pool, Palestine, General, 1920-1921, NY_AR1921_01185.pdf.
[291] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Jerusalem Relief Department, June 1919, NY_AR1921_00913.pdf.
[292] Ibid.

vulnerability these religious institutions endured, hesitancy to open themselves up to further scrutiny or oversight was not understood to be in their best interests.[293]

Accusations against the Committee

Accusations of corruption were of course not limited to individual rabbis, ethnic and religious groups, yeshivot, or private Orthodox orphanage institutions; they were also lobbied at the Joint, Hadassah, and the Zionist Commission. A central charge by religious leaders was that Jewish children under the care of the Joint or Hadassah were deprived of a proper Jewish education and upbringing.[294] For the rabbis leading various factions of Jewish communities, a "proper" Jewish education did not just mean Orthodox, but their particular group's religious schools and practices. Orthodox leaders appeared to believe themselves to be fighting over the souls of the Jewish children by way of attempting to influence placements. By all accounts, the processes of placement, however, were fluid and responsive. Well through the final years of WWII, Henrietta Szold's and her predecessors' guiding principle for the religious question in placement remained linked to the child's religious upbringing—if there was any—and undefined cases were forwarded to various institutions for evaluation.[295] In fact, accusations about whether religious standards, such as kashrut, Shabbat, and Jewish holidays, were being upheld were almost always grounded in questioning Szold's personal religious observance and upbringing.

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[293] For an overview of the Ashkenazi Old Yishuv and its institutions, see: Menachem Friedman, *Society in a Crisis of Legitimization: The Ashkenazi Old Yishuv, 1900-1917* (Jerusalem: Mosad Byalik, 2001) (Hebrew).

[294] On tensions between the Old Yishuv and New Yishuv regarding education, see: Nava Dekel and Ruth Kark, "Universal Values in Childhood Concepts and Education in the 'New Yishuv,' 1882-1914," *Israel Affairs* 25.1 (2019): 85-101.

[295] The Jewish Agency for Palestine Child and Youth Immigration Bureau, Plan for the Absorption of 20,000 Children and Youth, February 1, 1945, Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society, Collection # I-578, RG1 box 31 folder 229, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, (1 of 9) (2015-04-27 174214).pdf

Even posthumously, leaders defended Szold's commitment to religious education and observance against her detractors.

The Orthodox factions of the Old Yishuv also accused the Zionist Commission of withholding financial support for various yeshivot and Talmud Torah schools in Jerusalem. The Va'ad Ha'Ashkenazi, comprised of 70 elected representatives of Orthodox Jewry in Jerusalem, publicly alleged that the Zionist Commission inflated the amount of monthly support for teachers and pupils (£E10), while the Va'ad claimed the actual amount distributed was £E1–2 monthly and not for every institution. In fact, the Va'ad described a scheme in which the ZC attempted to leverage financial support to persuade the Talmud Torah schools to come under the supervision of the *Va'ad Ha'Hinuch* (Education Council)—a charge the ZC denied.[296] Likewise, accusations of favoritism towards orphanage institutions and foster care stipends over Orthodox schools abounded. In January 1921, an article in *Haaretz* newspaper accused the Committee of wasting large sums money in support on non-existent orphans, widows, and deserted families. The newspaper went on to publish a retraction of the story a few days later, declaring that there was no evidence found to support the claim.[297] All sides of these public and private disputes appear to have leveraged personal relationships and public shaming pressure to achieve their respective goals: for the Orthodox, that meant operational independence and complete financial support; for the ZC and the Joint, that meant pressuring the representatives of the Va'ad Ha'Ashkenazi to be transparent about their revenue streams, to improve their facilities and operations, and to better organize their teaching staff. [298]

[296] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #168.2, Trouble in Jerusalem with the Zionist Commission, NY_AR1921_01254.pdf.
[297] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.1, David de Sola Pool, Palestine, General, 1920-1921, NY_AR1921_01185.pdf.
[298] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #168.2, Trouble in Jerusalem with the Zionist Commission, NY_AR1921_01254.pdf.

Distribution Challenges

In 1921, internal memos from the Joint reveal that the Va'ad Ha'ir, itself underfunded, struggled to establish organizing principles and processes to distribute aid on a mass scale to so many different recipients.[299] In fact, the splintering of Jerusalem's Jewish community into Sephardic, North African and West Asian, and Ashkenazi—and then sub-divided into kolelim within those categories based on national origin, linguistic ties, and rabbinic loyalties—effectively resulted in the dilution of power and funding through the reduction of each group's numbers. While splitting apart gained smaller groupings independence and control over their halukah distributions, it also reduced their fundraising capacities abroad when dominant organizations like the ZC, the Joint, and Hadassah sought to prevent individuals from collecting funds abroad fraudulently or otherwise. The Joint repeatedly made explicit statements against pauperization and the halukah system, while also encouraging families abroad to support their brethren in Palestine. In fact, Committee members made direct appeals at the outset of their work to solicit funds from relatives of Palestine's poor in the U.S. and elsewhere."[300] The success of such outreach is unclear, but its limitations are not: Letter writing campaigns conducted by rabbis in private Orthodox orphanages and individuals on behalf of themselves took months for the initial correspondence to receive a response, followed by an even greater lag time for money to be sent, received, and then distributed. The effort mounted for raising funds for one or two individuals could have equally been spent writing letters on behalf of institutions benefitting dozens, if not hundreds, of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children and families.

[299] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.1, David de Sola Pool, Palestine, General, 1920-1921, NY_AR1921_01185.pdf.
[300] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.1, Summary of Relief Work in Palestine August 1920, September 8, 1920, NY_AR1921_01129.pdf.

Another challenge facing the Joint in its attempt to centralize fundraising efforts and the distribution of charitable funds was the instability of resources. Since funds were raised on an ongoing basis and transferred often sporadically depending on the Joint's overall commitments, the Joint could neither guarantee support month to month nor for six to twelve months in advance for disadvantaged and orphaned children and orphanage institutions. Rather, the Committee would receive ongoing requests for a certain amount and remittance was transferred on an ad hoc basis, which inevitably lead to the implementation of short-term fixes rather than long-term investments in permanent solutions. The variability of this arrangement influenced how effectively the Committee worked as well as the decision-making processes for funding children under their care and in institutions. In October 1919, the Committee's monthly relief budget of the Palestine Orphan Committee was US$70,000 (£E16,203) with no guarantee that funds would arrive in November and beyond. In private letters, Committee leadership lamented the precarity of the situation and requested stronger guarantees for long-term funding commitments in order to be able to shift the ways in which they were currently working (e.g., not committing to build new orphanages at this stage, despite the urgent need to improve the living conditions of children in existing orphanages and in private homes).[301] Another contributing factor to the fluctuations in the relief budget from month to month was the fact that the Joint's New York office transferred fixed amounts in U.S. dollars despite the oscillations in currency valuation for the Egyptian pound. Both the Joint's intentional reduction of the Committee's monthly relief budget as it sought to wind down support in Palestine to shift its priorities to Europe in the early 1920s and the economic impact on the money transfers resulted in the

[301] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from A. (van Vriesland), Treasurer of the Zionist Commission to L. Seligsberg, October 23, 1919, NY_AR1921_00950.pdf.

Committee's inability to set a fixed budget, to guarantee ongoing support, and to invest in longer term projects to support the growing needs of increasing numbers of children.

Indeed, the Palestine Orphan Committee carried out its relief work throughout 1921 under the imminent financial pressure that funds would dry up within a month or two should the Joint decide not to distribute funds or to significantly reduce their budget for orphan work.[302] An effect of the Committee's fiscal insecurity was that significant time had to be spent writing letters of appeal and fundraising rather than carrying out the work on the ground. Budget reductions also led to personal attacks against the regional director, De Sola Pool, as he carried out instructions from the Joint in New York to reduce and eliminate the monthly budget in May 1921 from the Mutual School Benefit Society.[303] As such, the Committee was subject to pressure not only from religious groups, but labor groups as well who anticipated that the elimination of the monthly allowances for their workshops would lead to overall less income for them as the work shifted to payment per commissioned item. The attacks were both verbal and physical when single men and larger groups would storm the Jerusalem office demanding subventions.[304] In August 1921, the Workmen's Sick Benefit Society protests against the decreases in financial support flooded the newspapers, a move interpreted by De Sola Pool as an attempt to publicly blackmail the Joint.[305] The scope of need from all sectors of Palestine resulted in the Joint and Hadassah reporting feeling financially and operationally stretched, at times unwilling to take on

[302] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #168.1, David de Sola Pool to the Joint's office in Paris, Re: General Relief in Future, February 27, 1921, NY_AR1921_01390.pdf.
[303] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #168.1, Albert Lucas to the Joint office in NY, Attacks on Dr. Pool, May 27, 1921, NY_AR1921_01457.pdf.
[304] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, David de Sola Pool to the Joint's office in Paris, July 3, 1921, NY_AR1921_01403.pdf.
[305] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #168.1, David de Sola Pool to the Joint's office in Paris, Re: Workmen's Protests, August 3, 1921, NY_AR1921_01411.pdf.

new projects because of a lack of sufficient funds and qualified people to carry out the work, and exacerbated by their inability to realize the important work of child welfare services to its fullest potential.

It should also be noted that the Joint did not limit its financial support for Jewish communities in the former Ottoman Empire to Palestine. It also budgeted £E625 per month for the benefit of Jews in Damascus, Beirut, and Sidon (Lebanon). In those areas, money went to orphanage institutions, disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children in private homes, workshops, medical aid, soup kitchens, sewing workshops, and to the families of "Turkish volunteers" (i.e., Jewish men who fought in the Turkish army under the Ottomans during WWI).[306] Based on the budget from October 1919, the Joint was officially sending financial support to 114 known orphans in Damascus alone. With limited and uncertain budgets, the Committee spent time and resources to manage and distribute funds to a diverse cohort of competing interests and groups, likely unable to satisfy most along the way.

Historical Roots of Fraudulent Fundraising for Orphanages

The historical structure of the halukah system in the Old Yishuv seemingly enabled both fraud and infighting among competing ethnic and religious groupings of Jewish men and families. Originally, only men who proved to meet scholarly qualifications from their religious studies were to be eligible for halukah distributions. Up until the 19th century, Jerusalem's Jewish population was dominated by Sephardic Jews, and the few Ashkenazi Jews, though pious, tended not to meet those qualifications. Under these terms, recipients were mostly Sephardim,

[306] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from A. (van Vriesland), Treasurer of the Zionist Commission to L. Seligsberg, October 23, 1919, NY_AR1921_00950.pdf.

and the amounts were much larger, if infrequent. This meant that the majority of Jerusalem's population—both Sephardic and Ashkenazi—adapted to living without that steady stream of financial support, while some recipients of halukah seemed to treat it as something they were entitled to and that should fully support their financial needs.[307] With the increasing numbers of Ashkenazi Jews arriving in the 18th century and in Jerusalem particularly during the 19th century, halukah distributions shrunk due to the increased number of recipients overall and the Ashkenazi community at large now able to rely more on halukah funds than ever before.

To resolve disputes over the funds, Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities were given a generally equal allotment by local councils and allowed to distribute to their communities as they saw fit. The Sephardim maintained their historical view by and large that halukah was meant for the most learned religious scholars and their families, and the rest of the community continued to work in trades and manual labor to support themselves. On the other hand, the Ashkenazim tended to interpret the meaning of halukah funds to be for every member of the community, including widows, orphans, the general poor, and institutions, though the most learned still receiving a greater sum. Therefore, the distributions were much smaller and could not fully support anyone.[308] The subsequent fracturing of the Ashkenazi community led to the establishment of the kolelim which organized to supplement halukah funds with individual fundraising schemes abroad, thus establishing a historical precedent for the competing fundraising that would later conflict with Zionist and American Jewish organizations' efforts to

[307] Manneberg, 76-79.
[308] Ibid. See also: Yair Wallach, "Rethinking the Yishuv: late-Ottoman Palestine's Jewish communities Revisited," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 16.2 (2017): 275-294; Yuval Ben-Bassat, "Rethinking the Concept of Ottomanisation: The Yishuv in the Aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45.3 (2009): 461–475; Menachem Friedman, *Society in a Crisis of Legitimization: The Ashkenazi Old Yishuv, 1900-1917* (Jerusalem: Mosad Byalik, 2001) (Hebrew); and Jehuda Reinharz, "Old and New Yishuv: The Jewish Community in Palestine at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 1.1 (1993-1994): 54-71.

consolidate financial support for the Yishuv after WWI. The two structural factors of the Ashkenazi halukah system—a general sense of entitlement to financial support and that it was to be used to support institutions like orphanages and yeshivot—seemingly facilitated corruption and competition over funds when the categories of recipients of halukah expanded and the population grew. For the Palestine Orphan Committee, the distinction between what centralized social services could offer Palestine's Jewish communities in place of the halukah system in the interwar period in part rested on the ability of the Joint to employ professionals to investigate and identify the true needs of the communities. The work therefore aimed to change disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children's lives and conditions—leading them to self-sufficiency—rather than maintaining a condition of dependency.

The Committee did not conceal its view that the kolel system enabled both the misappropriation of halukah funds raised from abroad and the perpetuation of a subset of society that did not work, which kept hundreds, if not thousands, of children in poverty and in need of institutional support. In 1919, at the outset of his work with the Committee, De Sola Pool criticized the notion that adult men should receive financial support in lieu of employment "just because they, their parents, or their grand-parents happened to be born in Bukovina or Galicia or Hungary…"[309] The Zionist Commission likewise expressed criticism of the various kolelim. In response to claims by the Hungarian Kolel that they were discriminated against by the ZC regarding the amount of funding they received, the ZC asserted the kolel is "headed by men who claim a monopoly of Judaism and make orthodoxy their own personal possession."[310] These criticisms were also likely grounded in the tensions between the Palestine Orphan Committee

[309] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from David de Sola Pool to the Joint, November 30, 1919, NY_AR1921_00983.pdf.
[310] Ibid.

and the various kolelim over distributing funds to their specific groups and interests and the distribution of relief for thousands of disadvantaged and orphaned children receiving financial support from the Joint. Attempts to unite the kolelim under one organization tasked with fundraising and equitable distribution resulted in the formation of the *Va'ad Ha'kelali of Knesseth Israel* (the General Committee of Israel). This administrative body claimed to have all Ashkenazi kolelim as members, which was debunked when the Zionist Commission revealed that neither the influential Chabad nor Hungarian kolel were members. However, the Va'ad Ha'kelali reportedly distributed monies equally among its members, and the result was very low subventions due to the high number of individual recipients.

In fact, when implored by the Joint's New York office to include representatives from the political extremes of Jerusalem Jewry on committees for the distribution of relief funds, the Committee denounced another group, the Va'ad Ha'Ashkenazi, describing it as a one-man, obstructionist organization that represents Jews of the extreme right wing (e.g., "rigidly orthodox," against the secular use of the Hebrew language, and against secular education).[311] These right-wing values conflicted with the Palestine Orphan Committee's goal of establishing permanent child welfare systems where disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children would have access to secular (and religious) education and vocational training. The Va'ad in turn lobbied complaints against the Zionist Commission and the Palestine Orphan Committee and often took its grievances to the British authorities—a practice which was criticized, owing to the presumptive fabrication of his complaints.[312] The Committee rejected the Va'ad's suggestion that a monthly relief budget should be distributed to each council to manage its recipients and

[311] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from the Zionist Commission to the Joint, August 7, 1919, NY_AR1921_00934.pdf.
[312] Ibid.

distributions, on the grounds that the Va'ad Ha'Ashkenazi remained a stronghold of the halukah fundraising system wherein fraudulent begging letters were sent, high commissions for the individuals who traveled abroad to collect the funds were paid out, and charitable funds to the rich and poor alike were distributed. In this regard, the Palestine Orphan Committee sought, if not always succeeding, to maintain itself as a non-partisan administrator above the political fray and positioned to balance the numerous competing interests on behalf of the entirety of Palestine's Jewish communities. [313]

Fraudulent Fundraising Tactics

Because the Joint distributed financial support to individuals and institutions whose monthly incomes also comprised halukah funds, the amount, frequency, and also the conditions of receiving support from the Palestine Orphan Committee was of constant and considerable debate. In 1919, the Committee approved funding for the ten best students in yeshivot, which was conditional upon receipt of an accounting of their income received from other sources—something the institutions refused to supply.[314] The refusal to be transparent in this regard further fueled claims of corruption in the yeshivot and Torah Talmud schools, who were already accused of inflating the numbers of students in general, and of the ones engaged in exceptional study. It also revealed, in some cases, more specific accusations of the fraudulent fundraising abroad that the Joint sought to curb, as it perceived these actions to threaten the legitimacy and reputation of their orphan work. In 1919, Yeshiva Sha'ar Ha-Shamayim, a Kabbalistic yeshiva, asserted it had

[313] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #173.1, Letter from Sophia Berger to Albert Lucas, Relations with British Government, July 23, 1920, NY_AR1921_04013.pdf.
[314] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from A. (van Vriesland), Treasurer of the Zionist Commission to L. Seligsberg, October 23, 1919, NY_AR1921_00950.pdf.

branches with hundreds of students, yet the Committee determined it to have 15 students and function as a business run "for the benefit of a few men."[315] Accusations against the Palestine Orphan Committee, focused on ideologically motivated favoritism and discrimination, surfaced in the fundraising appeals presented abroad. The *Va'ad Ha'ir Likehiloth Ha-Ashkenazim*, an extreme right-wing organization in Jerusalem, claimed in their letters that the Orthodox were being made martyrs by the Zionist Commission. In his fundraising appeals in America for various Orthodox institutions in Jerusalem, the Committee accused Dov Behr Manischewitz of using exaggerated headcounts: 1,300 pupils at Talmud Torah and Yeshiva Etz Chayyim when the Committee's figure was 730; 550 pupils at Yeshiva Torat Chayyim, while the Committee claimed 100; 200 pupils at Ohel Moshe Yeshiva, but the Committee counted 15.[316] Similar alleged overcounts occurred with the two orphanages that Manischewitz fundraised on behalf of: 250 reported at Diskin's orphanage in comparison with the Palestine Orphan Committee's count of 185, and 200 reported at Weingarten's as opposed to 70 reported by the Committee.

There were several reasons for the Palestine Orphan Committee to intervene with yeshivot and orphanage institutions' fraudulent fundraising, particularly in America: the approach of multiple entities in Palestine seeking funds for similar causes often led to an overall reduction of funds both raised and available, diluted the intended emotional connection to the Jewish war orphan cause, and it was thought to damage the reputation of the child-saving effort as well as the larger Zionist project. The Committee did not appear to take issue with the fundraising deployed on behalf of yeshivot in Europe. But the Committee attempted to prevent institutions in Palestine from issuing appeals or sending representatives to the U.S., likewise, due

[315] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from David de Sola Pool to the Joint, November 30, 1919, NY_AR1921_00983.pdf.
[316] Ibid.

to the enormous cost associated with a traveling representative resulting in much of the collected donations funding the trip itself. Other institutions relied on volume rather than presence for fraudulent fundraising: The ZC determined the school "Beth Chinuch Yeladim" to be run as a fundraising business by two men after having purchased it for £E300. They were found to be issuing thousands of begging letters on behalf of the school, in which there was no supervision and no evidence of teaching or caregiving taking place.[317] Examples of individuals sending appeal letters on behalf of themselves also occurred. The ZC identified a man who sent printed letters claiming to be in serious financial need, despite earning a living for himself and his family as a carpenter and joiner. These cases in particular seem to have bothered the Zionist Commission as it was thought to reflect poorly on the Zionist leadership's ability to distribute its funds and support Palestine's Jews, and thus endangering the basis of its authority to govern in the Yishuv.

Additional tactics used to raise funds fraudulently included creating pamphlets or flyers with images of institutions that did not yet exist. In 1919, the Bikur Cholim hospital sent appeals featuring a picture of a future building representing the hospital as it stood, even though no such building existed. The hospital claimed to be "the greatest institution in Palestine" where people from all over Palestine came to be cured of their diseases. The Palestine Orphan Committee, on the other hand, claimed that the old-fashioned hospital with no more than 50 beds was in no position to make such claims to potential supporters.[318] Other individuals sought to raise funds by creating fake organizations entirely, such as the alleged establishment of the *Hebrath Mezake et Harabim*— a society dedicated to daily religious study (*Keter Torah*), Sabbath religious study (*Shomre Shabath*) and midnight study (*Chasoth Layla*). The Zionist Commission's distaste for

[317] Ibid.
[318] Ibid.

these types of religious institutions was made clear by their assertion that such an institution does not and should not exist.[319] In fact, in a 1918 comprehensive report on welfare needs, the Committee suggested engaging "Military Authorities" to "prevent the creation of new and worthless institutions" by refusing to sanction "any such which cannot show a real need, proper lines of work and efficient control."[320]

Finally, the Zionist Commission and the Joint often addressed legitimate orphanages attacking one another in their appeals. In December 1919, the Diskin Orphanage attacked the Blumenthal Orphanage "in violent terms" as an institution that should not exist (presumably due to accusations of corruption and mismanagement of its children) and that its very existence damages the interests (i.e. reputation) of the Diskin Orphanage.[321] What emerges from these oft-exchanged memos between the Zionist Commission and the Joint's Palestine Orphan Committee is not only a strong desire to centralize fundraising efforts for Palestine but also clear concern over the reputation of the organizations—and that these instances of public-facing fraud posed a threat to their standing in Jewish communities as well as the child welfare work conducted on behalf of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children.

Controversies with Private Orphanages

By November 1919, three private orphanages established at the beginning of the 20th century remained scandalized in the records of the Joint. The Zionist Commission reported to the

[319] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from David de Sola Pool to the Joint's office in New York, December 11, 1919, NY_AR1921_01027.pdf.
[320] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.
[321] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from David de Sola Pool to the Joint's office in New York, December 11, 1919, NY_AR1921_01027.pdf.

Palestine Orphan Committee that Blumenthal, Weingarten, and Diskin were all operating "unsatisfactory" institutions and flagged them for raising funds in America fraudulently.[322] The spectrum of Jewish identity and its accompanying religious and political organizational groupings make clear *how* and one of the many ways *why* the fate of the children was fought over: groups competed over financial support and the soft power that was directly linked to numbers claimed in their institutions. The same structure applied to orphanages and educational institutions that taught, housed, or did both for disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children. Within its limited budget, the Joint initially allocated funds in 1919 for the following categories related to orphaned children and then funneled it through the local Va'ad: orphaned children living in private homes (which was a category for children living with one parent or a family member or in foster care), orphanages, and equipment for a new orphanage.[323] Much like the relationship between the Zionist Commission and various Orthodox institutions, the Palestine Orphan Committee and its successors, including Hadassah, were often at odds with the existing private Orthodox orphanages over financial support, fundraising, conditions and oversight, placement, and more.

In fact, inspections of those private Orthodox orphanages were common sources of disputes in the Committee's work. As the oldest, continuously operated orphanage institution in Palestine, the Diskin Orphanage was plagued with controversies over its mismanagement of funds and lack of sufficient care for its charges from its inception. Following a brief residency in his private home, Yehoshua Leib Diskin secured the funds to rent larger spaces to accommodate

[322] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from David de Sola Pool to the Joint, November 19, 1919, NY_AR1921_00983.pdf.
[323] See: JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from A. (van Vriesland), Treasurer of the Zionist Commission to L. Seligsberg, October 23, 1919, NY_AR1921_00950.pdf.

more children. Early on, Diskin collected money from the kolel to open training classes for the community in tailoring, shoemaking, and Torah-writing.[324] By the end of WWI, Diskin's orphanage self-reported 150 Ashkenazi boys in residence. While the WWI years had a significant impact on the ability of institutions to sufficiently care for the children due to being financially cut off from the global philanthropic and halukah systems, members of the Palestine Orphan Committee noted particularly dire conditions upon inspection of the institution in 1918: overcrowding in the dormitories with beds spilling out into the hallways; children appearing undernourished; and insufficient or non-existent washrooms, bathrooms, drinking water, and sewage systems.[325] These conditions were particularly scandalous since Diskin's orphanage was better funded compared to the other orphanage institutions. As was common, older children were tasked with looking after younger children. In this case, the largest proportion of children living at Diskin's were over the age of 14, and the youths served as teachers to the younger children. It was often suggested that due to the high proportion of older boys, abuse and neglect were rampant.

Because both real and inflated occupancy numbers led to increased financial and material support, institutions such as Weingarten's Orphanage for Girls continued to accept disadvantaged children from poor families—rather than strictly full or half orphans and despite the institution's failure to adequately support the charges under its care—seemingly to increase its fundraising power.[326] The link between accusations that Weingarten ran the institution as a for-profit business appears substantiated in the face of continuous financial support but lack of

[324] Henrietta Szold, "Recent Jewish Progress in Palestine," *The American Jewish Year Book* 17 (New York City: American Jewish Committee, 1916), 119.
[325] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.
[326] JDC Archives, Records of the Jerusalem office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File # 173.1, Letter from A. L. Seligsburg to Mrs. Otis A. Glazebrook, July 16, 1920, NY_AR1921_04018.pdf.

improvement in the living conditions of the institution itself. In other cases, it was not only money that was diverted from the children, but also donated material goods such as clothing, bedding, and toys delivered to Palestine from abroad that failed to reach them. Indeed, corruption often led to institutions failing to maintain basic levels of sanitation, provide beds and linens, regular meals, access to proper hygiene, and education.[327] Both typhus and meningitis swept through the institution, and the mattresses and bedding were reported to be soiled and insufficient. The girls lacked food (only bread and rice were found), clothing, and soap. It was common to find the older girls out on the streets late at night.[328] The Palestine Orphan Committee accused Weingarten's orphanage of mismanaging material support received as well, since goods continued to flow into the institution, but the poor condition of the children's environment remained the same. The Committee first granted Weingarten a subsidy with no oversight requirements attached in the hope of meeting the immediate needs of the children.[329] When no change occurred, a second appeal for financial support was granted with the contingency that the Committee be permitted to place a "matron" or house mother to oversee the care of the children. Weingarten agreed and the arrangement lasted up to eight months—during which time the Committee paid the matron's and a teacher's salaries, provided new linens and sanitary equipment, and supplied the children's food. Further attempts to help reform the orphanage, such as the request to have a representative of the Joint join a local Mizrachi Committee to look after standards of cleanliness and hygiene—not education or religious

[327] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1914-1918, Folder #122, Appendix Part I. Industries to be Revived, NY_AR1418_00634.pdf.
[328] The concern for keeping the girls off the streets was also a recurring theme that arose in both the correspondence and reports of the Joint as well as promotional materials aimed at raising funds to support the girls' orphanage. See: JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.
[329] JDC Archives, Records of the Jerusalem office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File # 173.1, Letter from A. L. Seligsburg to Mrs. Otis A. Glazebrook, July 16, 1920, NY_AR1921_04018.pdf.

curriculum—were rejected.[330] Subsequent inspections revealed the washing facilities installed by the Committee went unused, the girls appeared unkempt and unclean, and a lack of soap or toothbrushes in the entire facility.[331]

Under the short-lived care of the new matron, girls from the institution reported to Alice Seligsberg of the Palestine Orphan Committee in 1920 that they experienced what love and kindness meant for the first time in their lives.[332] While the perception of orphanage institutions as inherently lacking in a familial atmosphere and relationships, some children's experiences in institutional care appear to have been dependent on the individual in charge of their care rather than solely on intrinsic qualities or structures of institutional life. In fact, when the Committee made clear no additional funding would come from them after Weingarten's dismissal of the new matron, some children refused to remain at Weingarten's citing cruel neglect by the elderly couple employed as managers. Absent legal mechanisms to formally remove children, the Committee was forced to place some 40 girls in private homes after they ultimately ran away from the institution.

A later investigation of Weingarten's Orphanage for Girls in 1934 by the Va'ad Leumi (General Council) Department of Social Services revealed additional opportunities for mismanaging the budget and facilities. The report included a detailed accounting of the quantity of food distributed to each child daily down to the gram: 333 grams of bread and matzoth, 23 grams of meat and fowl, 5 grams of fish, 82 grams of milk, 4 grams of cheese, 17 grams of fats, 45 grams of rice and beans, 65 grams of tomatoes and cucumbers, 13 grams of grapes, and 15

[330] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from the Zionist Commission to the Joint, August 7, 1919, NY_AR1921_00934.pdf.
[331] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #173.1, Letter from Sophia Berger to Albert Lucas, Relations with British Government, July 23, 1920, NY_AR1921_04013.pdf.
[332] JDC Archives, Records of the Jerusalem office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File # 173.1, Letter from A. L. Seligsburg to Mrs. Otis A. Glazebrook, July 16, 1920, NY_AR1921_04018.pdf.

grams of halva and jam. The report characterized the children's diet as "insufficient in essential food products" owing to the lack of butter and inadequate amounts of meat and eggs.[333] Across the previous three years budgets included in this report, the budget allocation for the children's food and maintenance steadily decreased. One might suspect this trend reflected a reduction in the overall income of the orphanage, but it remained steady due to increased support from Palestine offsetting a decrease in funds raised abroad. Yet, staff salaries and travelling expenses saw no such decrease.

Similarly puzzling conditions were reported in Blumenthal's orphanage in 1920. The Palestine Orphan Committee provided two financial grants prior to inspection for the immediate purchase of food for the boys. Following a approach to reforming Blumenthal's as had been attempted in Weingarten's, the Committee installed a matron, paid her salary, and provided an adequate budget for food and clothing. The Committee requested that all children attend a school in which Hebrew was the language of instruction, that no children were admitted or discharged without their consent, and that the physical well-being of the children should exclusively be under the supervision and responsibility of the matron. Not only were none of the conditions met, but the matron reported to the Committee that the proprietors of the institution were appropriating money and goods for their private use.[334] The institution's reported true conditions—wherein 150 boys lived with 56 beds, some two to a bed and the rest on the floor, many with body sores and suffering from malnutrition—were obscured by its well-maintained building exteriors and public spaces that impressed the casual visitor.[335] Blumenthal's orphanage

[333] Jewish Community of Palestine, General Council, Department for Social Service Information Bureau, Report on Weingarten Orphanage for Girls, Jerusalem, Central Zionist Archives, September 1934, J17714/1 (2015-01-12 072425).pdf.
[334] Ibid.
[335] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.

thus maintained a strong fundraising campaign by claiming the Zionist Commission and the Joint refused to support it based on the fact that it was an Orthodox institution.

The private Orthodox orphanages were also accused of mismanaging funds in relation to their employees. In 1919, the Weingarten Orphanage employed three managers and staff for £E51.5 annually, while the Joint's Tushyia institution paid higher salaries to one manager and staff for £E38.25. Meanwhile, Weingarten allocated just £E3 a month for the purchase of butter, milk, and eggs for 69 children, and Tushyia spent £E17 on butter, milk, and eggs to provide for 46 children. The Palestine Orphan Committee argued that the differences in these figures demonstrated the stark difference in the conduct, character, and priorities of the respective institutions.[336] It may also suggest that sufficient resources were in fact made available at times to the institutions to improve and maintain suitable conditions for the children. Where this differed was in the case of financial support given to children in private homes, due to the determination that significantly larger sums were needed to improve their overall conditions. These early discoveries of the nature of the orphan problem and local constraints contributed to the Committee shifting from prioritizing the placement of children in private homes to orphanage institutions, group housing, and children's villages managed by the Joint and later Hadassah.

Unspecified or Temporary Orphanages

The Hilfsverein Orphanage (distinct from the network of kindergartens, primary schools, a teachers' college, a commercial high school, a kindergarten teachers' seminar, and a rabbinical college[337]) was established by the German-Jewish philanthropic society, *Hilfsverein der*

[336] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Jerusalem Relief Department, June 1919, NY_AR1921_00913.pdf.
[337] There is no mention of an orphanage in Moshe Rinott, "Capitulations: The Case of the German-Jewish Hilfsverein Schools in Palestine, 1901-1914," in David Kushner, ed., *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*

Deutschen Juden (Aid Society of German Jews) in Petach Tikva. In 1918, the Joint reported 32 girls in its orphanage, and it was deemed a model institution that provided exceptional hygienic and education care, but its origin and sustained presence is not clear. According to the Committee's report, the institution was run by a Mrs. Silbersmidt (née Goldsmidt), who sent the girls to the Hilfsverein school.[338]

Another, unnamed orphanage was organized by "the Rabbi and Mrs. Roth," in 1916—a year prior to the Joint's inspection in 1917—in response to the abundance of orphaned Jewish children living on the streets of the Old City. The private home turned group home housed 15 girls and 15 boys and was located near the Strauss Soup Kitchen, where Mrs. Roth was superintendent of cooking. Unlike other orphanage institutions, the Roth's had not applied for financial support from the Committee, so no further records determine whether it continued to exist in the interwar period. The building itself was deemed unsuitable at the time for a long-term housing solution, though the beds and dormitory rooms were reported as clean. As was customary, the older girls took care of the younger children, in addition to carrying out the housework in the private home.[339] It seems likely that the steady supply of adequate nutrition from the soup kitchen would have made a marked difference in the children's overall well-being at this unofficial orphanage. The existence of this undocumented orphanage may also suggest that other smaller and self-funded orphanages and group homes existed during the interwar period in Jerusalem and throughout Palestine. Independent, communal support for disadvantaged and orphaned children may also account for the differences in total estimated numbers of

(Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Press, 1986), pp. 294-301. Since the orphanage was located outside of Jerusalem, and thus beyond the scope of this dissertation, the author has only limited information about this orphanage. Since it was mentioned in important reports at the time, it remains here and could be useful for other researchers.

[338] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.

[339] Ibid.

orphans (in the thousands) and the enrollment numbers in the official orphanages that sought funding from organizations—in addition to the numbers unaccounted for living in unofficial foster care or with extended family.

Other references to ad hoc attempts to educate large groups of disadvantaged children appeared in the Joint's earliest reports on the conditions of Jerusalem's orphan problem. Described as a Talmud Torah school, the Committee reported in 1918 its discovery of a large building in the Boukhara Quarter containing 400 young boys and girls. A few elderly, Yiddish-speaking women and two or three teenage girls appeared to be running the school, though the space was sparsely furnished with only a few benches. The women provided no information to the Joint regarding the children's housing and well-being, who started the school, or how it was financed.[340] As may have been the case here, the Bukharian Jews and other groups left outside of the halukah systems organized self-help within the community and may not have necessarily sought support from the outside or had the ability to initiate fundraising campaigns to foreign donors.

Early Children's Villages

The renewed spike in concentrated violence and pogroms in the Russian Empire between 1903 and 1906 produced more than 1,500 orphaned Jewish children, many of whom were sent to Palestine.[341] Menachem Mendel Ussischkin (1863–1941), a prominent Russian Jewish Zionist leader, spearheaded a plan to settle the orphaned Jewish children of Kishinev victims in Palestine.[342] The number of children in need surpassed the capacities of Jerusalem's existing

[340] Ibid.
[341] Thirty-nine pogrom orphans were placed in private homes throughout the U.S., among the total number of 53,000 immigrants. See: Monty Noam Penkower, "The Kishinev Pogrom of 1903: A Turning Point in Jewish History." In *Modern Judaism* 24.3 (2004): 187-225.
[342] *Bnai Brith Messenger*, Friday, November 27, 1903, [retrieved from the Historical Jewish Press (JPress) of the NLI and TAU].

orphanage institutions, which required thinking both beyond of the structure of an orphanage institution and the limited urban space of Jerusalem. The children's village, a kibbutz-like setting in rural agricultural Palestine, functioned as a hybrid working-studying-living environment for Kishinev orphans. In this setting, the mission was to support traditional Jewish religious practices (observing Shabbat, holding religious services), to imbue Zionist ideals of working the land, volunteerism, and sacrificing one's needs for the larger collective, and to provide a home-like setting of smaller clusters of younger and older children. The rural setting proved suitable for housing an influx of orphaned children arriving at one time, while also providing enough open space to accommodate future expansion.

The first children's village in the Yishuv, Kiryat Sefer (later known as Meir Shfeya), functioned as a hybrid orphanage and kibbutz where the children studied, worked, and lived as a community. Initiated in 1890 by Baron de Rothschild, it was conceptualized by Israel Belkind (1861–1929), founder of Bilu and First Aliyah pioneer, as refuge for Jewish children orphaned by the Russian pogroms. The children's village was conceptualized to house transfers of children from Jerusalem's orphanages as well as schools needing temporary housing in the fallout of the ending of the Ottoman Empire. Later, in 1927, the well-known Ben Shemen Youth Village would be established there and gain international recognition through the production of a feature-length, fictionalized propaganda film of youth Holocaust survivors adjusting to their new life in the village.[343]

[343] See: Hadassah's *Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day*, which was shown in the U.S. for fundraising purposes. *The New York Times* printed a review of the film. See: A.W., "'Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day' About Orphans' Rehabilitation in Israel, at the Stanley," *The New York Times*, April 11, 1949, https://www.nytimes.com/1949/04/11/archives/tomorrows-a-wonderful-day-about-orphans-rehabilitation-in-israel-at.html.

Reflections on Institutional Care

For a turn of the century Jewish orphanage in America, the institution functioned as a controlled, communal space that lent itself to the opportunity to "Americanize" new immigrants from the Russian Empire whose "Orthodox faith, Yiddish speech, and Zionist hopes set them apart from the culturally German Reform Jews…"[344] Acculturated Jews feared the newcomers would threaten their position in the community and instigate new waves of antisemitism towards them. The Americanizing vocational training in the Cleveland Asylum, for example, focused on teaching boys to work as farmers or mechanics in an effort to undercut antisemitic stereotypes and discrimination in the workforce. The American view of Eastern European Jewish immigrants as backwards often alienated Jewish children from their parents, a similar experience of children from North Africa and Western Asia in the Yishuv.

Meanwhile, institutions brought their own ideological baggage to the work of caring for disadvantaged and orphaned children, which resulted in the best place being subject to the ideals of Zionist and American Jewish organizations. So, too, the competing visions for what a Jewish national home and future State of Israel should be in terms of its character, its Jewish identity, its language, its cultural ideals were reflected in the shifting notion of the best place for the Jewish child: secular or ultra-Orthodox, Zionist or anti-Zionist, exalting Hebrew language or Yiddish, study Torah or train in a trade. In short, the principles governing the management of Palestine's Jewish children were also reflections of competing views of the future and character of Israel itself; disagreements over child placement reflected the same disagreements Jews all over the world were having over what a Jewish national home should be.

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[344] Matthew A. Crenson, *Building the Invisible Orphanage: A Prehistory of the American Welfare System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 106-107.

Zionist and American Jewish philanthropic organizations clearly viewed the orphanage institution and the Jewish war orphan problem as an opportunity to help determine the upbringing and ultimately character of Jewish children in alignment with the Jewish values and Zionist ideals that they believed would come to characterize and contribute to a future Jewish state. Determining whether they succeeded is not the goal of this work but rather to better understand how these institutions were viewed and valued in relation to the upbuilding of a Jewish national home and to illuminate the prominence of the Jewish orphan problem that has thus far been overlooked.

In the case of Jewish Palestine, the lack of emotional support, social status, a sense of belonging and familial history that orphanage institutions typically have failed to provide disadvantaged and orphaned children was perhaps supplanted by invitation into a larger social movement: Zionism. By plugging the experience of orphanhood into the mechanisms of the upbuilding of a Jewish national home, Zionist ideals could provide disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children with a tangible sense of purpose in the greater society, an identity rooted in values of hard work and communal responsibility for one another, and a link to the historic Jewish familial past regardless the circumstances or continuity of one's family. This of course was made at the expense of one's personal identity in many ways: having to learn and use a new language, adapting foodways to the local climate and culture, and accepting and implementing modern practices in medical care, nutrition, and hygiene. Because the fate of thousands of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children enmeshed in the fate of a larger national movement as well as other social and political movements in the Jewish world, the expected shortcomings and critiques of institutional life both manifested in the usual ways of corruption and insufficient care and subverted them with greater access to healthcare and education; dedicated nurses,

doctors, teachers, and social workers; and vocational training with the goal of integrating this often marginalized population into the new Hebrew society.

Chapter 4

Making Hebrews: Education, Work, and Socialization

"Mrs. Schoolman said we are not fulfilling our full Zionist responsibility if Hadassah does not do something in the field of education, which is a crucial problem at this time."[345]—Meeting notes from Hadassah's Palestine Committee, April 17, 1945

"…the children are the plastic clay from which is molded the future."[346] —Thelma Goldfarb, February 20, 1928

Throughout the Joint's and Hadassah's archives, American Jewish leaders and social workers remarked frequently—and perhaps a little surprisingly—that the "orphan class" were the healthiest and most educated of children in Palestine during the interwar period. Disadvantaged and orphaned children in institutional facilities often lived, studied, trained, and worked together—an arrangement which fueled the success of fundraising campaigns abroad and allowed for resources to be pooled and shared. In the best circumstances, children living under institutional care were provided with clothing, bedding, food, routine health care, and supervision in schools. Under the direction of American Jewish philanthropic organizations, teachers, nurses, and social workers instructed Jewish children in modern views on hygiene, nutrition, health, and various trade skills in addition to religious and secular subjects in schools, as well as on playgrounds, in soup kitchens, private homes, and orphanage institutions. By contrast, it was said, families with low- or no-income suffered from malnutrition, coped with illnesses without the ability to pay for a doctor, and lacked access to preventive care and education. Disadvantaged and orphaned children in private homes struggled to complete

[345] Meeting notes from Hadassah's Palestine Committee, April 17, 1945, Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society, Collection # I-578, RG1 box 31 folder 229, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, (1 of 9) (2015-04-27 174214).pdf.
[346] Thelma Goldfarb, Draft article for infant welfare pamphlet, February 20, 1928, Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society, Collection # I-578, RG2 box 72 folder 1, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, (2 of 2) (2015-04-29 105452).pdf.

schooling due to the need to earn money. The lack of a compulsory education law only added to the sense of education being a choice, not an expectation. Both direct institutional care and the oversight of children subsidized to remain in private homes created, the argument went, a situation in which individuals or organizations influenced not only the children's living conditions but also the nature of their education and upbringing. Was this indeed the case?

This chapter examines how disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children living under institutional care were raised to be future citizens of a Jewish national home: through civilizing programming intended to disseminate modern Western values and dispel outdated understandings of child rearing and modern medicine; through an emphasis on Zionist ideals in education, agricultural training, and trade skills required to contribute to the upbuilding of a Jewish national home; and through the socialization (e.g. language, climate, foodways) of displaced and destitute Jewish families and orphaned children seeking an economic future in a foreign land. As such, this chapter argues the survival, education, and flourishing of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children in Eretz Israel was in many ways a prism through which to assess the sustainability of the Zionist nation-building project.

Childhood in Mandate Palestine

While late 19th century Jewish childhood in Ottoman Palestine was in many ways characterized by infant death, high child mortality rates, child marriage, and child labor, the 20th century ushered in childhoods defined in large part by displacement, poverty, and disease (chronic malaria, smallpox, rabies, typhus, trachoma, ringworm, and even bubonic plague).[347]

[347] For more on sanitation, disease, and health care, see: Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine 1917-1948* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000); Sandra M. Sufian, *Healing the Land and the Nation: Malaria and the Zionist Project in Palestine, 1920-1947* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007); Shifra Shvarts, "Who Will Ensure the Health of the Yishuv? The Workers' Sick Funds During World War I," *Cathedra: For the*

Jewish mortality rates in Jerusalem increased by four times between the immediate pre-war period and 1917.[348] The untimely deaths of Jewish men and women resulting from war, poverty, and disease produced both thousands of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children as well as a society as a whole weakened by illness, unsanitary living conditions, and the lack of wage earning employment.[349] Throughout the Mandate years, the British government's inadequate investment in health care and education—allocated as roughly 7% of the overall budget for Mandatory Palestine but in practice often utilized half that—resulted in Zionist and American Jewish organizations, including the Joint and Hadassah, directing these two critical realms of development and social welfare in the Yishuv.[350]

Displacement and Childhood

In the years leading up to the outbreak of WWI, an estimated 24% of Jewish immigrants from the Russian Empire to Palestine were aged 0-15.[351] During this period, historians once characterized immigrants to Eretz Israel as primarily motivated by the desire to fulfill the rabbinical commandments associated with being physically present in the Holy Land, or, in smaller numbers by a fierce commitment to Zionist Socialist ideology. Thanks to the work of scholars of Jewish migrations, ideological drivers of this period of immigration to Eretz Israel

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History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv 74 (1994): 120-139 [Hebrew]; "The Development of the Jewish Health Care System in Palestine and Israel during the Twentieth Century," *Jews and Medicine* (1995): 257-271; *The Workers' Health Fund in Eretz Israel: Kupat Holim, 1911-1937* (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, University of Rochester Press, 2002); and Nadav Davidovitch, Rhona Seidelman, and Shifra Shvarts, "Contested Bodies: Medicine, Public Health and Mass Immigration to Israel," *HAGAR: Studies in Culture, Polity & Identities* 6.2 (2006): 35-58.

[348] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1914-1918, File #122, Letter from Abram J. Elkus, U.S. Ambassador to Ottoman Turkey, American Embassy in Constantinople, to Henrietta Szold, private and confidential, January 18, 1917, NY_AR1418_00552.pdf.

[349] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.

[350] For reference, the budget for police and prisons was five times the budget designated for education. See: Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand*, 127.

[351] Alroey, *An Unpromising Land: Jewish Migration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century*, 112.

have been disentangled from the mythology long embedded in the historiography. A majority (72%) of all immigrants during this time were keen to settle permanently in Palestine rather than to die (13%), visit (8%), study (6%), or heal (1%)—a feature of migration between 1904-1914 that has been attributed to the high numbers of women and children.[352] As such, disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children should be seen first and foremost as refugees fleeing total economic destruction and violence just as were those who migrated to the U.S. The differences between those who immigrated to America and those who went to Palestine are in part rooted in the socioeconomic dynamics of the time. The considerable expense of the journey to the U.S. (nearly US$9,000 at the time)—four times greater than the journey to Palestine (about US$1,800)—made Palestine a more realistic option for desperately poor migrants.[353] It also helps to reframe and rethink the established narratives in Zionist historiography that neatly assign ideological motivations for immigration in certain periods that do not adequately reflect the complexity of immigration during that time. The fate of thousands of Jewish children is a story of a refugee crisis beginning with local outbreaks of violence and economic alienation and then compounded by the effects of global war. Certainly, holding Zionist values and being a refugee are not mutually exclusive categories, but this disentanglement permits the use of an analytical lens that opens up a previously limited scope of understanding who the immigrants were and why they came, as women and children remain largely absent from contemporary narratives.

Poverty and Childhood

Striking as it may sound, for destitute women and children seeking opportunity in a new life in Eretz Israel, as well as scores of women, children, and families already struggling in

[352] Alroey, 118-119.
[353] Ibid.

Palestine, a childhood determined by poverty at times resulted in parents seeking placement for a child in orphanage institutions. This meant that orphanages were not exclusively maintained for children with no parents; in fact, for some, they functioned as opportunities for destitute families to provide their children with access to education, medical care, and necessities they themselves could not. In this way, poverty threatened children's personal well-being as well as familial ties. Institutions were similarly appealing to newly immigrated families from North Africa and West Asia who sought or were convinced to seek ways to acculturate into the developing society's putatively modernizing ways. The organizations and the individuals (social workers, teachers, doctors, and nurses) working with the children with families understood the opportunity for the institution to be a socialization mechanism not only for the children under their care but also to disseminate valuable information and norms to the "backwards" families.

Widely accepted narratives about Arabs and Jews from North Africa and West Asia illustrate how those families tended to resist modern medicine and education in favor of relying on familiar, traditional medicine, including bloodletting, amulets, herbs, cauterization, and belief in the evil eye.[354] Some of the reasons behind the hesitation to adopt modern practices were completely practical: For example, the local population's experiences of newcomers and disease was based on a history of transient visitors—first pilgrims returning from Mecca and later Turkish soldiers—traversing the land and igniting numerous cholera epidemics.[355] The historical experience of living in the harsh conditions of Ottoman and early Mandatory Palestine necessitated a reliance on self-help, local networks, and traditional healers absent a sustained

[354] These anecdotes are littered throughout primary source documentation, as well as secondary sources. See: Nadav Davidovitch and Zalman Greenberg, "Public Health, Culture, and Colonial Medicine: Smallpox and Variolation in Palestine during the British Mandate," *Public Health Reports* 122.3 (2007): 398-406; Sandy Sufian, "Mental Hygiene and Disability in the Zionist Project," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 27.4 (2007).
[355] Davidovitch and Greenberg, "Public Health, Culture, and Colonial Medicine: Smallpox and Variolation in Palestine during the British Mandate," 399.

institutional alternative. Poverty was one of several variables that led to the entrenchment of local populations in traditional medicine, in addition to the incompetence or indifference of first Turkish and then British governing bodies to establish social welfare relief and education in modern health care and infant care. One of Hadassah's doctors, Benno Gruenfelder, reported that parents of North African or West Asian origin admitted cases of malnutrition resulting in infant death at a rate of 88% in comparison to 12% of cases from American and European origin.[356] Dr. Gruenfelder's extensive report attributes this stark difference to cultural disparities among the regions of origin, but also highlights nuances even within ethnic groups: Yemenite Jews from cities tended to fare better than those from rural areas owing to the former's high "standards of culture, civilization, and domestic hygiene."[357] However, to better understand the role of poverty in childhood health outcomes, one must consider that focusing solely on the dearth of knowledge obscures the fundamental problem of poverty: Mothers lacked the financial means to enact those best practices for their children, even if they were exposed to that information. Education, culture, or religious superstitions were simply not the only factors at play.

So, one way Hadassah took on a primary role in alleviating the strain that early childhood poverty in Mandatory Palestine placed on expecting mothers and their babies was by distributing milk to infants through the system of milk stations (*Tipat Halav* or "Drop of Milk") initially sponsored by Nathan Strauss. Much like the child welfare systems developed during this time, Tipat Halav formed one of the many bases of the future Israeli health care system. Then, in 1921, Hadassah established an infant welfare clinic in Jerusalem where mothers could bring their

[356] Letter to Henrietta Szold from Dr. Benno Gruenfelder, Report on infant welfare and mortality to the Vaad Haleumi Leknesseth Yisrael, June 30, 1939, Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society, Collection # I-578, RG2 box 72 folder 1, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, (2 of 2) (2015-04-29 105452).pdf.
[357] Ibid.

babies for wellness checks, doctor examinations in cases of illness, and advice on feeding and caregiving. Due to popular demand, a second clinic was opened in Jerusalem, and by 1923, some 350 babies were registered under their care. More than 500 visits were made to the clinics in January of that year alone, as the introduction of preventative care and health and wellness education aimed to maintain babies' health rather than react to medical emergencies left untreated due to a lack of financial means.[358] Dubbed a "school for mothers," the infant welfare stations served young mothers, a quarter of whom were under the age of 20. Since one of the main challenges was reaching the population of expectant mothers, the Jerusalem clinics maximized their visits to also include the distribution of financial relief and advice if the women were in search of employment as well.[359]

Disease and Childhood

After WWI, the conditions of the Yishuv were dire. There was no functioning hospitalization network. The arrival of American nurses with Hadassah before WWI and then a relative surge in personnel (44 doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists) and supplies after WWI fundamentally changed the health trajectory of all of Palestine's residents, notably mothers and children. Efforts to dry out the malaria-ridden marshes of the land were underway. And nurses and doctors could not only treat illnesses, but finally diagnose them: "Fifty per cent of the children in the Jewish settlements in the early Mandate period had enlarged spleens, the indicator of chronic malaria. The disease was under-reported, since so many suffered from recurrent,

[358] Mrs. Goldfarb, Report of Infant Welfare Fund, December 28, 1927, Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society, Collection # I-578, RG2 box 72 folder 1, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, (2 of 2) (2015-04-29 105452).pdf.
[359] "Social Service and Child Health Association," *Haaretz*, February 7, 1928, Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society, Collection # I-578, RG2 box 72 folder 1, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, (2 of 2) (2015-04-29 105452).pdf.

undiagnosed 'fever.'"[360] Hadassah nurses also worked in schools and later playgrounds to eradicate trachoma, a highly contagious bacterial infection that is the leading preventable cause of blindness. In 1913, nurses found trachoma rates in some Jerusalem schools to be as high as 80 out of 100 children. By 1918, some 40% of schoolchildren were afflicted, and by 1944, the cases had dropped to 2.6%.[361]

Prior to the return of Hadassah and arrival of the American Zionist Medical Aid Unit in 1918, and then another influx of doctors from Germany in the 1930s, access to nurses and doctors in childhood was costly and limited.[362] Workers unions and political groups attempted to address the critical challenge of providing health care for workers and their families, including children, in order to keep workers working and voters voting. Workers unions sick funds consolidated into the *Kupat Holim* (Sick Funds) of the *Histadrut* (General Organization of Workers in Israel) in 1921, followed by others over the next two decades. Chronically underfunded and initially concentrated in agricultural settlements, the Kupat Holim serviced a small percentage of the population—only 20% by 1930.[363] This left scores of disadvantaged children and their caregivers without the means to see a doctor.

Having sick parents or caregivers also meant that most other elements of a child's life were destabilized: loss of income and access to workers' sick funds, early departure from school

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[360] Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand*, 132-133. On the history of malaria in Mandatory Palestine, see: Sufian, *Healing the Land and the Nation: Malaria and the Zionist Project in Palestine, 1920-1947* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007).
[361] Hadassah the Women's Organization of American, Inc., *Statement to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Washington, DC, January 1946), 19.
[362] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1914-1918, File #122, Letter from Abram J. Elkus, U.S. Ambassador to Ottoman Turkey, American Embassy in Constantinople, to Henrietta Szold, private and confidential, January 18, 1917, NY_AR1418_00552.pdf. For a comprehensive look at the history of health services in Eretz Israel, see: Shifra Shvarts, *The Workers' Health Fund in Eretz Israel: Kupat Holim, 1911-1937* (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, University of Rochester Press, 2002).
[363] See: Shifra Shvarts, "The Development of the Jewish Health Care System in Palestine and Israel during the Twentieth Century," in *Jews and Medicine: Religion, Culture, Science* (1997), 257-271.

in order to earn money, malnutrition, and rising numbers of children orphaned by one or both parents. Displacement, poverty, and disease were interdependent elements of a Jewish childhood in Mandatory Palestine, which led to fundraising for and the establishment of health care and education systems. The import of doctors, the establishment of nursing schools, and the construction of hospitals and clinics were but several critical actions required to overhaul the health and well-being of disadvantaged and orphaned children—education in modern medicine, nutrition, sanitation, and more was required if one was going to build trust among the population to actually utilize the increasing availability of medical services.

Educating Orphans

Initially lacking a compulsory education law and government financing, funding from abroad helped to create a modern Jewish education system. Traditional religious Jewish educational institutions focused on the study of Hebrew and Jewish texts to the exclusion of secular subjects. Western Europeans imported modern schools to the Yishuv during the Ottoman period—namely, the Lamel School (1856), *Alliance Israelite Universelle* (1860), and the *Hilfsverein der Deutsche Juden* (1901).[364] As such, no unified Jewish school system developed until after WWI with the influx of immigrants, funds from abroad, and the eventual consolidation of political and religious groups into the education streams that have persisted down to today.[365] For disadvantaged and orphaned children, the mere existence of kindergartens and schools did not mean universal access. Their ability to attend school depended on a confluence of factors:

[364] And the years before WWI saw Zionist *gymnasiums* and the religious Zionist Tachkemoni schools.
[365] For more on the early roots of education in Palestine and Israel, see: Noah Nardi, *Education in Palestine*, 1920-1945 (Zionist Organization of America, 1945); Joseph S. Bentwich, *Education in Israel* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1965); Aharon F. Kleinberger, *Society, Schools, and Progress in Israel* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1969); Mordechai Arieli, Yitzhak Kashti, and Simcha Shlasky, *Living at School: Israeli Residential Schools as People-Processing Organizations* (Tel Aviv: Ramot Publishing Co., 1983).

financial support to pay for tuition in some cases, books and supplies, food (hot lunch programs), and above all, to offset the economic needs of families in order to incentivize keeping their children in school.

The effort to provide children access to secular education and supervised recreation while in private Orthodox orphanages was contentious, as forces often in conflict with the traditional Jewish world (in Palestine, this was referred to as the "Old Yishuv") sought to turn Jewish Palestine into a modern, nation-state. For the aspiring Jewish nation-state to develop and thrive, its future citizens (i.e., workers, soldiers, mothers) required the skills to also survive and thrive—not all of which could be achieved in the confines of formal, religious education. Indeed, the services Hadassah provided, including infant health care, school hygiene and anti-trachoma service, school lunches and nutrition education, and supervised recreation, had the explicit goal not only of maintaining children's health, but of teaching children the necessary skills to have a "well-round personality" and be a "useful member of the community."[366] In the summer, while orphaned girls attended a local playground in the afternoons, the Palestine Orphan Committee hired two men to instruct boys aged 9 to 14 at the Lamel School in gymnastics, football and other sports, and singing.[367] Personality-building programming also extended beyond the classroom and playground. Hadassah ran summer day camps and 2-4 week overnight outdoor summer camps for children in need of rehabilitative care. In addition to exposure to fresh air, sunshine, the ocean, and nature—all elements deemed necessary for the rehabilitation of children in poor health—children learned to pitch their own tents, cook over a fire, and work and play together in a "cooperative outdoor life of fun and sport."[368]

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[366] Hadassah, *Statement to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry*, 17.
[367] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Mr. S. Lowenstein, August 4, 1919, NY_AR1921_04194.pdf.
[368] Hadassah, *Statement to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry*, 22.

As views of children and their role in the family and society evolved in the interwar period to become keener on the child's development and well-being, so too did the range of activities and support systems deemed necessary for child development. The pursuit of a modern education system reflected social welfare trends underway in the U.S. wherein services ancillary to the typical school day were being developed: playgrounds, daycares, clubs, after school recreational centers, and summer camps. In tandem with instruction in health, nutrition, sanitation, and a variety of vocational training, these components of formal and informal education for Jewish children shared a goal: the creation of a healthy society with healthy children as its foundation. Under the direction and financial support of American Jewish philanthropic organizations, these activities were also designed to support and disseminate American Progressive and often Zionist values shaping institutions and practices in the Yishuv.

Schools

The fragmented, unregulated, or temporary arrangements for educating children before WWI and in the immediate aftermath posed a number of challenges for the Joint in attempting to identify, visit, and organize financial support and oversight for schools at the beginning of their work. Citing the difficulty of ascertaining an accurate head count, the Joint estimated a wide range between 3,500 and 6,000 pupils in Talmud Torah schools and yeshivot. However, this does not reflect numbers of children alone, as some institutions housed both yeshivot and Talmud Torah schools in the same building and thus served children as young as three through adults in old age. This was the most predominant form of schooling at the time and available only to boys and men. The traditional methods of religious education, including young children sitting in place for several hours at a time, were at odds with modern, American Progressive ideas of

children's educational and developmental needs. Disadvantaged and orphaned children living under institutional care may have had access to these schools, but even within an orphanage, schooling was not necessarily coherent for all. In Blumenthal's Orphanage, which housed both Ashkenazi and Sephardic children, the Committee reported that the latter received educational instruction at the institution, while most of the Ashkenazi youths inexplicably received none. Some boys were sent to the Alliance workshops or the local Talmud Torah school.[369] In Weingarten's Orphanage, three Hebrew teachers and two general studies teachers provided instruction for the first six elementary school classes in a building attached to the orphanage.[370]

Foreign schools, such as Miss Landau's School for Girls, Alliance schools, and Hilfsverein schools, each served hundreds of children in often overcrowded buildings with insufficient funding for teachers and supplies. In 1919, Miss Landau's school enrolled 580 children. Alliance schools had an attendance of some 460 students. And Hilfsverein schools counted just over 1,000 students from two kindergartens, boys' schools, a girl's school, and a Talmud Torah school.[371] Foreign investment in these schools was similarly unreliable but also subject to increasing criticism in the local community as Hebrew-language education developed and Zionist values were disseminated. One of the costliest stumbling blocks to establishing a network of modern, Hebrew-language schools was the lack of buildings in which to house them. Private houses were converted to daycares for infants and young children, just as hundreds of children would gather in ad-hoc spaces for Talmud Torah schools. The Joint identified the need

[369] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.
[370] Jewish Community of Palestine, General Council, Department for Social Service Information Bureau, Report on Weingarten Orphanage for Girls, Jerusalem, Central Zionist Archives, September 1934, J17714/1 (2015-01-12 072425).pdf.
[371] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.

to import raw materials such as iron and wood to build schools in Jerusalem, which would also help to alleviate the unemployment problem of skilled quarrymen and builders.

Playgrounds and Supervised Recreation

Playgrounds were a fixture of mandatory childhood and performed a variety of functions in addition to a space for children to play. In the summer of 1919, the Palestine Orphan Committee arranged for 75 orphaned girls to attend a recently opened playground every afternoon free of charge under the supervision of the home-visitors. The high cost of living and insufficient subsidization for foster families to meet the children's needs necessitated this escape from their "sordid" home environments.[372] In 1925, Hadassah organized the construction of playgrounds funded by the interests of American Jewish philanthropist Bertha Guggenheimer.[373] The first of which opened up on September 1, 1925 on a lot on the edge of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem.[374] Two years later, the playground was moved to a larger lot near Zion Gate. Upon the death of the playgrounds' benefactor in 1927, the stewardship of the initiative was transferred to Hadassah in her will. With a special fund dedicated to this endeavor, Hadassah was able to continue its work building playgrounds and funding extracurricular activities. The establishment of playgrounds and other recreational opportunities for Jewish children was one of many responses to realities on the ground: the seemingly unavoidable social problem of disadvantaged, orphaned, and otherwise unsupervised children roaming the streets of

[372] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Mr. S. Lowenstein, August 4, 1919, NY_AR1921_04194.pdf.
[373] Prior to her death in 1927, Bertha gave $50,000 for a trust to fund playgrounds in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Tel Aviv after establishing the first playground in the Old City of Jerusalem. In her will, she left $100,000 in a trust for Palestine with a special note on the need for playgrounds. See: https://www.jta.org/archive/mrs-bertha-guggenheimer-leaves-125000-bequests.
[374] Shehory-Rubin and Shvarts, "Teaching the Children to Play," 24-25.

Jerusalem, often witnessed by a prominent American visitor then spurred to action.[375] The largely undocumented history of Jewish prostitution in the Yishuv also served as an impetus to keep young girls "off the streets."[376] Here, the practical realities and their solutions dovetailed with ideological concerns and opportunities for disseminating social values. Playgrounds and penny lunches were no exception.[377]

Indeed, the neighborhood playground served as a space for children to learn social norms and boundaries, to play with children in similar age groups, and to escape the difficult conditions of Palestine's overcrowded and unsanitary homes. As such, the playground reached those children outside of the schools and child welfare systems and supplemented the educational experiences within the school day. In addition to providing a safe space for children to play, the American import of the first playground was staffed by trained counselors to run activities such as sports, carpentry, games, singing, drama, sculpting, music lessons, drawing, and crafts. Special programming also expanded from the playground activities that serviced on average 200 children daily. Excursions, camping trips, and projects such as building a meteorology station, designing a museum of children's artifacts, and maintaining gardens are just a few of the supplementary educational initiatives offered in the space of the playground.[378] In 1929, Hadassah opened another playground at the *Kol Yisrael Haverim* (Alliance) School in the Machane Yehuda neighborhood of Jerusalem's New City. The success of these Jerusalem

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[375] See: Zipora Shehory-Rubin and Shifra Shvarts, "The 'Guggenheimer—Hadassah Playgrounds' in the 1920s," *Cathedra: For the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv* 86 (1998): 75-98 (Hebrew); and in English: "Teaching the Children to Play: The Establishment of the First Playgrounds in Palestine During the Mandate," *Israel Studies* 15.2 (2010): 24-48; Zipora Shehory-Rubin, "The 'Cafeteria': The Hadassah School Luncheons Program in Eretz Israel," *Cathedra: For the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv* 92 (1999): 107-134 (Hebrew).

[376] Gur Alroey mainly utilizes newspapers from the time to stitch together this unmentioned (in some cases covered up) phenomenon in *An Unpromised Land*, 167-177. Mention of it in relation to girls in orphanages appears in Hadassah's and the Joint's archives, albeit indirectly.

[377] Erica B. Simmons, "Playgrounds and Penny Lunches in Palestine: American Social Welfare in the Yishuv," *American Jewish History* 92.3 (September 2004): 263-297.

[378] Shehory-Rubin and Shvarts, "Teaching the Children to Play," 28-29.

playgrounds inspired the establishment of playgrounds in Tel Aviv, Rehovot, Gedera, Ekron, Nes Ziona, Rishon LeZion, and Tiberias.[379]

An intended goal of this suite of activities—among the other stated aims of the establishment of leisure spaces for children and youth—was "preparing young people for life in the working society of the Jewish community in Palestine."[380] Playgrounds functioned as a space for engineering the development of "wholesome inter-group relations and attitudes." Hadassah's playground program employed arts and crafts to "develop the talents and skills of the children." And Hadassah's leadership asserted in a 1946 report to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry that disadvantaged children in particular benefitted from mending shoes and household furnishings in the playground—"providing excellent pre-vocational training."[381] In mutually beneficial agreements, Hadassah and local school principals exchanged access to the playgrounds during school hours for lots on or adjacent to existing schools upon which to build them. Despite resistance from community members who protested against the inclusion of non-Jewish children at the playgrounds, Hadassah purposefully opened the playgrounds to children without restriction to their background.

> The primary directive underlying the operation of the playgrounds was that they be open to children and teenagers of all ethnic groups and nationalities, regardless of religion, race, or gender. The first playground, established in a mixed Arab–Jewish neighborhood in the Old City of Jerusalem, was an innovation, because it was the first educational framework of its type established in Palestine with the aim of providing educational–social activity for children regardless of race, religion, or nationality, as dictated both by Bertha Guggenheimer in her will and by Hadassah ideology.[382]

[379] Ibid.
[380] Ibid.
[381] Hadassah the Women's Organization of American, Inc., *Statement to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Washington, DC, January 1946), 21.
[382] Shehory-Rubin and Shvarts, "Teaching the Children to Play," 32.

This approach allowed for opportunities not only for children to be exposed to one another in a supervised pluralistic setting, but also to work out the fears, anxieties, and politics governing the diverse population of Jerusalem and Palestine as a whole. Within the Jewish population of Jerusalem, tensions also rose between religious and secular Jews, the former disapproving of the playground activities in general and also ones taking place on *shabbat* (Jewish day of rest from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday) and holy days. The ideals for integrated spaces held up until the realities of increasing conflict between Arabs and Jews, such as the 1929 riots, required the playgrounds to be shuttered for several weeks until tensions cooled.[383] Another facet of playground politics included the assembly of a Children's Council, in which elected children worked alongside counselors to solve problems and take ownership over the playground programming. Opportunities for self-governance and life skills training, including exposure to the political strife permeating the city, abounded in these contexts for disadvantaged and orphaned children: on the playgrounds, in school cafeterias and soup kitchens, orphanage institutions, and children's villages.

Through schools and orphanage institutions, children could receive regular medical care from doctors, nurses, and dentists for the treatment of various ailments, including the aforementioned campaign to treat trachoma. Hadassah also utilized the playground to identify and treat children's health problems, notably reaching some religious children, those delinquent from schools, Arabs, and Christians in addition to the hundreds of Jewish schoolchildren. Nurses administered eye and skin examinations at the adjoining schools to children every three months in order to participate in playground activities. Nurses also treated and monitored children until their ailments, commonly trachoma and ringworm, resolved. The intentional proximity of the

[383] Ibid., 37.

schools and playgrounds allowed for school nurses to treat children with noncontagious illness, as well as disseminate information about personal cleanliness, using toothbrushes, and more. Owing to the fact that private homes typically did not yet have running water, Hadassah installed showers in 1928 to facilitate the implementation of the children's hygiene instruction.[384]

Penny Lunches and Soup Kitchens

The aversion to pauperization ran deeply within organizations like the Joint and Hadassah and its programs, notably the soup kitchen, aimed at solving the problems of the poor. Organizations assured donors that their philanthropic dollars did not subsidize people who did not want to work, but rather vulnerable children in need of their support. While initially soup kitchen staff would reportedly scold mothers for not working to provide for their children, Hadassah sought to reform the soup kitchen into a place that could service Palestine's disadvantaged and orphaned children, as well as provide much needed relief for the general poor. In an attempt to shift public perception of the soup kitchen—as perpetuating the halukah mentality—children and families often paid at least something for their meal. Hadassah also established the Palestine Penny Luncheons Fund committee in 1922 to collect pennies from American Jewish schoolchildren and directly fund hot lunch programs in Jewish schools in Palestine. Fundraising for both penny lunches and soup kitchens endeavored to establish programs that had several goals in mind: to connect Jewish children in both countries; to provide meals to the destitute children in Palestine; to educate Jewish children in modern nutrition, food values, and food preparation; and to deputize the children to disseminate that education to their parents or caregivers.[385]

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[384] Ibid., 41-42.
[385] Simmons, "Playgrounds and Penny Lunches in Palestine," 276-278.

By striving to connect Palestine's Jewish children with American Jewish children, Hadassah's work of connecting children to children on a global scale was something of an innovation. Much of what has been written about Hadassah rather uncritically describes how the women's organization gained acceptance in the philanthropic world due to the very scope of its activities in the realm of "women's work" (e.g., infant and mother health care, opening settlement houses and hospitals, school lunch programs, children's playgrounds, orphanages, social work, and more). And that this voluntary labor was "almost an inevitable extension of women's domestic concerns to the world outside the home."[386] Essentially, Jewish women owned the obligation for the welfare of Jewish children, but the organization actually parlayed that responsibility—perhaps unbeknownst to their supporters and benefactors—onto the entirety of the American Jewish community, including its children. Through campaigns among Jewish children and in synagogues, Hadassah galvanized these small donations for the penny lunch program, created pen pal programs with orphaned children in Palestine, and laid the foundation for an entire generation of Jewish children to embrace the notion of a Jewish responsibility for Jews everywhere.

In school kitchens, self-governance and skills training included the children themselves, particularly older girls, participating in the cooking responsibilities and serving food to their peers in the hot lunch program. By 1928, the school lunch programs fed 1,400 schoolchildren daily,[387] which was a notable innovation for Palestine's education system in facilitating the attendance of more and more children at school. One of the many goals of the school lunch program was to raise the health standards of the community at large by way of preventing hunger

[386] Ibid., 264.
[387] Ibid., 268.

and its related diseases among the children.[388] These programs often resembled domestic science education wherein manners and moral values were imbued into the chopping and preparing of nutritious meals sourced from local ingredients unfamiliar to new immigrants. Hadassah leaders often remarked how valuable this education was for Sephardic children, citing claims that the children had never used a fork and knife or sat a table to eat.[389] Indeed:

> "…among the hundred and twenty-five girls who eat their midday meal habitually at the school now, there is a large percentage that had never before sat down on a chair before a table to eat meals. It is an undertaking, thus, that has educational features over above the mere teaching of cooking – good habits and manner, and eventually it will be the means of teaching the food values of the rich variety of cereals and vegetables obtainable in Palestine, which are largely disregarded now, particularly by the newer arrivals."[390]

Whether the assessments of the newcomers were accurate, these statements may have reflected the perceptions and biases held by the nurses, doctors, and teachers toward the children and their families—biases which long pre-date the mass migration of non-Ashkenazi Jews following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. This food education also served to modernize Jewish households, improve health, and prepare youths for running their own households. The connections drawn between women's work and character building reveal the numerous attempts at civilizing taking place in all aspects of the disadvantaged and orphaned children's daily lives. What you ate and how you ate were measures of one's development or progress toward good citizenship. The distillation of values through food emphasized loyalty to and appreciation of the Land: To not just eat from but to *prefer* Palestine's offerings and local cuisine signified rejection of the Diaspora as a testament to their dedication to the upbuilding of a Jewish national home.

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[388] Hadassah the Women's Organization of American, Inc., *Statement to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Washington, DC, January 1946), 19.
[389] Simmons, "Playgrounds and Penny Lunches in Palestine," 278-280.
[390] Correspondence about Nellie Mochenson, Central Zionist Archives, 1924-1933, A125\43, (2015-05-19 030805).pdf.

And by empowering disadvantaged and orphaned children with some measure of agency in their social worlds, they contributed to those collective efforts of nation-building and Zionist values of cooperative living, while also developing the skills needed to become self-supporting future citizens.

As early as 1919, the Joint recognized the importance of the soup kitchen not only for the needs of the Yishuv's population as a whole, but specifically for the survival of its children.[391] In Safed, for example, the Joint requested £E30 to supplement the £E60 already provided by a private American enterprise due to the high demand from the local population to provide more meals for more children.[392] While debates over the soup kitchen—whether it was a valid form of support that should be available so long as hunger plagued the communities or an outdated mode of charity that reinforced existing problems to perpetuate poverty[393]—the Joint's leadership advocated to forgo its usual demand to oversee the kitchen in exchange for the increase in financial support due to the *necessity of feeding the children*.[394] The ideological criticism of the soup kitchen as promoting pauperism indefinitely did not, in this case, supersede the practical necessity of overcoming malnutrition and poverty for disadvantaged and orphaned children. Attitudes toward the responsibility to feed children above the politics of charity or American Jewish desires to reform mismanaged institutions speaks to the central importance of children in

[391] For more on the general crises of poverty in these pre-WWI communities, see: Menachem Monnickendam, "From Charity to Right: Work and Ideology During the Prestate Period," *Society and Welfare* 25 (2005): 461–84 (Hebrew); Menachem Friedman, *Society in a Crisis of Legitimization: The Ashkenazi Old Yishuv, 1900–1917* (Jerusalem, 2001) (Hebrew); Mordechai Eliav, *Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv in the Nineteenth Century, 1777–1917* (Jerusalem, 1978) (Hebrew).
[392] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from A. (van Vriesland), Treasurer of the Zionist Commission to L. Seligsberg, October 23, 1919, NY_AR1921_00950.pdf.
[393] John Gal and Mimi Ajzenstadt, "The Long Path from a Soup Kitchen to a Welfare State in Israel," *The Journal of Policy History* 25.2 (2013): 240-263.
[394] Emphasis mine. JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from A. (van Vriesland), Treasurer of the Zionist Commission to L. Seligsberg, October 23, 1919, NY_AR1921_00950.pdf.

this relief work, in the American Jewish consciousness, and in the Zionist project. At the end of the day, Zionist and American Jewish organizations by and large seemed to prioritize building a strong, healthy society, and ideological and political considerations that ultimately did not serve that goal took a backseat.

Training Orphans to Work

With support from individual philanthropists as well as American Jewish organizations, trade skills workshops opened for children, youths, and women to both make necessities like shoes and clothing for immediate distribution to disadvantaged and orphaned children and to provide a pathway to secure apprenticeships and earn a living. Due to the high cost of purchasing shoes and clothing in Palestine, the Joint solicited raw materials to be sent to the workshops and made into these critical goods, often by the children who needed them. Initially, apprenticeships were available to fully orphaned boys, who received a monthly stipend and were required to attend night school. The Joint hired employment agents to supervise the boys, ensuring that they continued to work and study and were not being exploited by their employer. The unemployment of trade workers who were cut off from financial support and raw materials from abroad during the war created challenges to placing boys in apprenticeships. Owing to the widespread poverty in the Yishuv, people needed the goods trade workers produced, but most people could not afford to pay for them. As a result, some 1,500 unemployed men registered with the Labor Bureau seeking employment in agriculture, as carpenters, mechanics, stoneworkers, smiths, masons, bootmakers, and other various trades.[395] Turning to girls' vocational education, the Palestine Orphan Committee sought to support existing training schools for girls and women in

[395] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.

sewing, lace and wool, embroidery, and housewifery, as well as expand other apprenticeships and workshops to include half orphans, disadvantaged youths, girls, and women as they received increased funding from American Jewish donors and the Joint.[396]

Gender and Work

In early 1918, the Joint recognized four ateliers (hybrid education-training workshops) in Jerusalem for girls and women that needed financial support. Mrs. Meyouchas' needle work school served 150 girls with many more mothers and girls requesting admission to the school. The school required funds to purchase additional chairs and tables in order to admit more students, as well as a monthly stipend to cover the cost of materials and salaries. Mrs. Hoofien's lace atelier accepted 120 girls with aspirations to expand into a school for housewifery, pending funds to expand and support the school. Mrs. Thon's lace atelier employed 140 girls and had at a time become self-supporting through the sale of its lace products. The precarity of the market though did not provide sufficient financial coverage when sales decreased, which prompted the request for a line of credit to be drawn upon as needed to pay salaries for the teachers and wages for the girls' work. Mrs. Thon's wool atelier retained 200 women and girls who spun imported wool in the workshop and at home to make clothing for disadvantaged and orphaned children. Outbreaks of malaria amongst the women and girls and the subsequent lost revenue from reduced output necessitated significant monthly support to maintain the workshop.[397]

The ateliers and trade schools for girls and women were established to address the lack of access to schools or training for girls and women with a number of aims in mind.

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[396] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Mr. S. Lowenstein, August 4, 1919, NY_AR1921_04194.pdf.
[397] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.

> These ateliers are carrying on a most important part of the educational needs of the city. Girls and women who have never received any training or education, are being taught habits of work, are receiving 2 hours daily Hebrew instruction, are gaining in self respect and abandoning their Chalukah out-look. They bring their new aspirations back into their family life. It is also a means which may save many girls from other dangers. It has to be recognized that the war has brought prostitution into Palestine.[398]

It seems American Jewish observers viewed the social problems of prostitution and reliance on halukah as threats not only to women's and girls' productivity and entry into socially acceptable employment, but also to their moral social standing in the community. The notion that the girls gained self-respect through Hebrew language instruction and vocational training, as if they somehow lacked it simply by virtue of being denied access to education and skilled employment previously, perhaps reflected the anxieties of the time over women's and girls' bodies and attempts to control them through vocational training. It seems also likely here that "prostitution" in this context may have been a catchall term applied to girls and women who engaged in sexual activity without the exchange of money or more generally in behaviors that challenged the social mores of the time (such as staying out late at night).

The Zionist aspiration for girls to grow into the nation's mothers might well have contributed to the moral panic over girls and women as seemingly autonomous beings employing their bodies in spaces and manners antithetical to the Zionist ideal. Reformation of the individual did not suffice and extended beyond the larger economic project of disseminating knowledge and practical skills. Here, disadvantaged girls and women should in turn impart Zionist *aspirations* to their families. The Zionist values of *desiring* to learn Hebrew and eschewing the Diasporic and Old Yishuv halukah mentality had the power to rehabilitate one's self-consciousness, not only one's external value through labor and participation in modern society. In another report on

[398] Ibid.

conditions and relief in Palestine following the war, the subject of girls' work in particular was important: "Special attention must be drawn to the support given to various workshops and workschools. These institutions provide work for many hundreds of girls, *that are kept away from the streets* and are taught sewing, embroidering, crocheting…"[399] The conflation of the need to create productive future citizens, protect girls' moral character, and disseminate the Zionist values of studying Hebrew and exercising a strong work ethic to their families certainly raised the stakes on the importance for raising funds and prioritizing these workshops when many schools and institutions were in competition for limited resources.

In some cases, orphanage institutions hired teachers to train children in-house in trades and skills. Weingarten's orphanage, for example, had two teachers of handiwork and embroidery as well as a sewing teacher on the payroll in the early 1930s. The goods produced and sold from these workshops in a particularly good year yielded £E248 or roughly the equivalent of the combined annual expenditures for laundry, cleaning, heat, light, and medical treatments for 1931-1932.[400] Likewise, the Institute for the Blind, which housed and educated 35 orphaned and non-orphaned children between the ages of 6 and 16, was well-regarded in the community for its music program, in which students were trained on the piano and had long provided the only orchestra in Jerusalem.[401] During the most difficult times in WWI, the students expressed a preference for starvation rather than selling the Institute's piano. In addition to music instruction,

[399] Emphasis mine. JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.2, Letter from A. (van Vriesland), Treasurer of the Zionist Commission to L. Seligsberg, October 23, 1919, NY_AR1921_00950.pdf.
[400] Jewish Community of Palestine, General Council, Department for Social Service Information Bureau, Report on Weingarten Orphanage for Girls, Jerusalem, Central Zionist Archives, September 1934, J17714/1 (2015-01-12 072425).pdf.
[401] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1914-1918, File #122, Palestine, Jerusalem, 1918, April 30, 1918, NY_AR1418_00485.pdf; also reported here: JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.

the children received training in Hebrew language and writing.[402] The Joint also supported the Institute's brush and basket weaving workshop, which was one of the few workshops in Jerusalem financed in the immediate aftermath of the war along with the Shoshana Lace School and Sewing School for Girls.[403] The Women's International Zionist Organization ran a hostel for immigrant girls and provided training in domestic science, gardening, bee-keeping, raising poultry, and dairying.[404]

Vocational training usually fell along socialized gender lines, in which boys gravitated to or were placed in workshops focused on carpentry, shoemaking, metalwork, and agriculture. Girls learned embroidery, sewing, cooking, and gardening, though overlap in cooking and gardening in mixed gender settings was more common. Hadassah reports emphasize in these cases that the youths themselves agreed on the placements and choices of trades, suggesting a measure of agency and self-governance among the children's work and training.[405] The strength of social expectations and gender roles in society certainly cannot be overlooked as one of perhaps several influences over the children's choices as well—particularly for this strata of disadvantaged and orphaned children whose path to mainstream social participation (primarily through marriage) required financial means and a desirable family background. Without what was considered to be the proper social training to be a wife, mother, husband, father, breadwinner, or caretaker, orphaned children would be further disadvantaged socially in adulthood.

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[402] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Folder #167.2, Notes on Jerusalem, May 1, 1918, NY_AR1921_00820.pdf.
[403] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, File #167.1, Summary of Relief Work in Palestine August 1920, September 8, 1920, NY_AR1921_01129.pdf.
[404] Correspondence about Nellie Mochenson, Central Zionist Archives, 1924-1933, A125\43, (2015-05-19 030805).pdf.
[405] Zvi Michaeli, "The Training Institution in Beersheba," Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society, Collection # I-578, RG1 box 31 folder 228, Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, (1 of 3) (2015-04-27 163649).pdf.

Children as Agents of Socialization

In addition to the deployment of institutions to serve as spaces for socialization (civilizing, educating, training, etc.), so too were children and families instrumentalized as agents of socialization to address social issues in the Yishuv. Outside of the schools, the organizing principles of adults were more fragmented—workers unions, religious, ethnic, and political groups, rural/urban communities—and required far more resources to gain and maintain regular access. This was evident in the Joint's and Hadassah's struggle to consistently monitor subsidized children in private homes and new mothers, as this subset of the population alone outsized the number of homes that a handful of professionals could meaningfully visit. Meanwhile, the strong social resistance to pauperism was largely directed at adults, which would have played a role in how charitable funds directed for educational services would have been developed and disseminated. In short, access to adults was easier, more affordable, and more socially acceptable to achieve through the children's social worlds than through the social networks of the adults.

At the outset of the Joint's fostering program in which relatives or strangers received a monthly sum to care for a child, the Palestine Orphan Committee set a policy to give a larger amount to non-relatives. The theory followed that a child's mother, grandmother, aunt, etc. should be willing to make sacrifices for the care of the child to supplement the income, whereas a stranger would not be expected to do so. This misguided attempt at making the children's relatives "noble" resulted in children living in worse conditions with their relatives than those living with strangers.[406] Attempting to use children to influence adult behavior backfired in the homes of non-relatives as well: Home visits often revealed that these families used the monthly

[406] JDC Archives, Records of the New York office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1919-1921, Letter from Alice Seligsberg to Mr. S. Lowenstein, August 4, 1919, NY_AR1921_04194.pdf.

sum as their only source of income to support their own families, which left some children in just as difficult housing conditions. The Committee recognized the limitations of this social engineering endeavor when it became clear in these cases that solving the core issue of poverty was not contingent on one's moral character and thus sought to raise the monthly stipends for all households.

The failure of the scheme to influence the behavior of the older generations also resulted in the instrumentalization of the children to isolate them from the "bad influence" in order to create a more hardworking and moral society in the future. At the outset of the Committee's orphan work in 1919, Seligsberg advocated for the removal of children from "bad homes"—even if the child is living with their mother—and placement of them in home-schools (i.e. the beginning conceptualizations of children's villages like Meir Shefya and Ben Shemen). Since Seligsberg ultimately rejected the possibility of reforming the older generations, the establishment of the orphanage-school institutions was conceptualized to alleviate overcrowding, eliminate the use of substandard private homes, and free up resources to improve satisfactory homes as well. Seligsberg continued in her appeal to the Joint's leadership that they had not been able to conceive of and implement an educational plan aimed at "developing the sort of manhood and womanhood Palestine needs," and instead had been trusting the intentions and character of the caretakers in private homes and orphanages.[407] Noting the frustrations with the poor quality of most of the existing orphanages as well as the problem of "troubled boys" and "wayward girls" running away from private homes, institutional group care reimagined with Zionist ideals of rural cohabitating, coeducating, and coworking sought to address both the practical needs of

[407] Ibid.

providing food, shelter, and clothing and the ideological ones of making healthy, productive future citizens.

When Hadassah took over child welfare work, adding to their existing priorities in direct health care and health education efforts aimed at new mothers (e.g., milk stations and nurse visits), they identified the opportunity to improve the health, well-being, and ability to function as a productive member of society through the education of its children. Reflecting back on this work, Hadassah leadership asserted in its 1946 report to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry that "the knowledge and competence they thus acquire [from nutrition training and meal preparation courses in school] are transferred to the home and community."[408] The child was an instrument of public health initiatives designed to train new immigrants in the new foods they encounter in Palestine as well as modern nutritional science to select foods for highest nutritive value. In other Hadassah materials, nurses are pictured instructing older girls in the treatment of "simple injuries" and "health rules" for them to transmit to their families.[409] Observers emphasized the severity of the challenges facing the dissemination of modern medicine to the adult population, namely mothers:

> Can you imagine putting mascara on a baby's eyes to enhance his beauty, or branding him with a hot iron to drive out his fever? Can you conceive of not having a doctor attend a woman in childbirth because it is forbidden for her to be seen or touched by a man when she is in labor? These are only two samples of the many problems which faced the two young American nurses send to the Holy Land…*to bring a health program to a country for centuries hidebound by disease and superstition*.[410]

[408] Hadassah the Women's Organization of American, Inc., *Statement to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Washington, DC, January 1946), 20.
[409] Julietta K. Arthur, "Child Welfare in the Holy Land: Hadassah's Network of Public Health across Palestine," *The American Journal of Nursing* 40.4 (1940): 410-414.
[410] Ibid., 410. Emphasis mine.

Not only did Hadassah's leadership, nurses, and social workers view the practical achievements of their extensive health care and child welfare work as contributing to larger social aims of the modernization and rehabilitation of a people, but American Jewish observers back home too perceived Hadassah's health work as a tool to liberate an entire country from its own ignorance and self-destruction—and perhaps overlooked the fact that culture practice (the use of mascara) was conflated here with folk medicine. Hadassah's own reports, appeals, and internal memos did not tend to go as far as pronouncing itself as a savior of Palestine, but rather limited itself to criticizing the lack of cooperation and willingness to adapt to modern ways. The projection of a messiah complex from an observer onto Hadassah's work perhaps reveals an American Jewish longing to hold an outsized role in the upbuilding of the Jewish state and center the success of the Zionist project in the American Jewish sphere of influence.

Hadassah leaders suggested the reason for utilizing children in the education and dissemination of this knowledge to their caregivers was motivated by the stubbornness of adults to change their ways. However, this explanation of the use of children as agents of socialization can be better understood by the inclusion of more tangible factors at play: access and financial support. In terms of access, Hadassah could deputize the existing or forthcoming teachers, nurses, and social workers who were already present, trusted figures in the children's lives. Hadassah nurses visited the homes of children who were out of school for more than two consecutive days to provide care and monitor their recovery. Those visits were also an opportunity to develop relationships with the child's parents or other caregivers, which then progressed to parents' attendance at health education lectures at schools and health centers. The

dual approach of engagement on an individual and communal level reached an estimated 80 percent of schoolchildren's caregivers.[411]

From Orphan to Citizen

Among the various forms of formal and informal education and vocational training, Zionist and American Jewish organizations endeavored to imbue self-sufficiency, to create healthy bodies and minds, and ultimately to produce strong, capable citizens in a future Jewish state.

> We are seeking here to create a new life for these boys and girls and to root their life in the soil of Palestine. The work, therefore, should have a double blessing for those who plant on the land and for the land itself, for these boys and girls who will grow into strong men and women will have for the land the love which children have for their father and mother.[412]

From the bond of the child to their mother and father to the bond of the citizen to the Land, the full scope of the Jewish child saving project in Eretz Israel is revealed. While indeed "Zionist nationalizing elites" may have been in many ways "primarily responsible for giving form to the Zionist culture that would come to characterize the Yishuv," [413] this chapter demonstrates how the role of Jewish children—both living in institutional care and otherwise—and the social workers, teachers, and nurses served as indispensable disseminators and shapers of Hebrew and Zionist education, socialization, and ultimately a national culture. American Jewish child welfare

[411] Hadassah the Women's Organization of American, Inc., *Statement to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Washington, DC, January 1946), 19.
[412] Letter to Herbert Samuel from the Palestine Orphan Committee, Central Zionist Archives, 1925, A255\722 1-4 (2015-01-11 060026).pdf.
[413] Arieh Bruce Sposnik, *Becoming Hebrew: The Creation of a Jewish National Culture in Ottoman Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), 6.

work in the Yishuv contributed demonstrably to the success of the Zionist project and the rehabilitation and creation of the new Hebrew society and future State of Israel.

Conclusion

I would like to offer a brief summary of the breadth of material traversed in the dissertation as well as each chapter's arguments and then examine an idea that did not find a place within the framework of the dissertation. Finally, I will conclude with some ideas for directions to take this dissertation into its next stage and for other possible avenues to pursue for myself and other scholars interested in this research.

In chapter one, I introduced key concepts, historical background, and social, political, and religious contexts of the pre-WWI Yishuv in which the growing numbers of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children emerge. The chapter provided an overview of immigration policies and practices under the Ottomans, traditional support systems for vulnerable populations in Jewish communities, modern Jewish attitudes toward orphanhood, and early attempts at orphan care through the establishment of orphanages before WWI. I illuminated how the orphan crisis developed and how key attitudes and themes commonly associated with later historical moments in Israel developed much earlier on. And I argued that the Jewish orphan problem in Ottoman Palestine—which captured the attention of Ottoman officials as well as Jewish communities worldwide—threatened the long-term viability and success of the Zionist project.

In chapter two, I focused on the role of American Jewish philanthropists and institutions in addressing the needs of the Jewish community in the immediate aftermath of WWI and its role in shaping ideals and attitudes toward disadvantaged and orphaned children. The chapter traced the implementation of those ideals, the shifts between foster care and institutions as placements for children, relations with the British Mandate government, the challenges of Jewish war orphans emerging in both Europe and Palestine, and the transition of leadership and responsibility from the Joint to Hadassah. And I argued that that the philanthropic intervention

for disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children in need of institutional care created an opportunity for American Jewish leaders to influence aspects of the Jewish national home and that the orphanage maximized that impact.

In chapter three, I examined the challenges and controversies in the development of child welfare systems in Palestine through an overview of the post-WWI Jewish communities in Palestine, the political barriers to child welfare work, American Jewish material contributions and fundraising abroad, and disputes over the "best place" for orphaned children. Because of the context and conditions in Palestine, I argued that the orphanage institution was in many ways an ideal place to raise and educate children despite conventional wisdom of the time.

Finally, in chapter four, I focused on how disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children living under institutional care were raised to be future citizens of a Jewish national home by way of serious and thoughtful consideration of how to educate and train them for work and independent living. The chapter analyzed the distinct features of childhood in the interwar period under the British Mandate, the informal and formal approaches to educating and training Jewish children, and the ways in which the socialization of children and their families contributed to the Zionist project. By examining the practical work and ideological entanglements of child welfare, I argued that Jewish war orphan problem became a central, but seemingly forgotten, fixture in the imaginations of Jewish communities worldwide because the stakes were so high—to save a Jewish child was a literal and metaphorical representation of saving the Jewish people.

Scholars have argued that the absence of stigma attached to residential education in Palestine was the result of the social status associated with existing residential education frameworks in the Jewish world—the yeshiva and Zionist training collectives in Europe.[414] The

[414] Mordechai Arieli, Yitzhak Kashti, and Simcha Shlasky, *Living at School: Israeli Residential Schools as People-Processing Organizations* (Tel Aviv: Ramot Publishing Co., 1983), 19.

premise here is that residential frameworks served primarily orphaned or delinquent children in orphanages or other institutions. The prestige of the yeshiva or Zionist training camps undercut the stigma that might have been expected to accompany residential living-learning-working arrangements. I think the historical context of both of those residential frameworks is most useful when thinking about perhaps the lack of surprise or suspicion with the development of children's villages, orphanage institutions, and group housing models, but stigma might be pushing the analysis beyond what it can support. Stigma still existed, very much so in a variety ways, as this dissertation has shown. There was an aversion to residential frameworks of all kinds due to their reliance on charity as well as the often-substandard living conditions and corruption. Disadvantaged and orphaned children could be found in yeshivot, just as children who were not orphans could be found in orphanage institutions. I think an important distinction between the perception of the yeshiva and the orphanage is the catalyst for entering into each of them: a yeshiva is first a school and second a living space, whereas an orphanage institution is first a living space and sometimes but not always a school second.

One of the many exciting prospects for this research is the opportunity to expand and compare: the book would traverse Jerusalem's borders to include deeper examinations of Jaffa, Safed, Tiberias, Hebron, and agricultural settlements. The Joint supported several Jewish orphanages throughout the Ottoman Empire, outside of Palestine, which would be fascinating to explore. There is also great potential for collaborating on publications with scholars looking at Arab, Christian, and Palestinian child welfare work during this period. There might also be room to take this story into the 1940s and 1950s, though much has already been written on Youth Aliyah, the rescue and rehabilitation of Jewish children pre- and post-Holocaust, and children in the refugee camps in Cyprus awaiting entry to the State of Israel. I could imagine though being

able to hold onto the thread of disadvantaged and orphaned Jewish children through these years as they fall distinctly outside of the efforts of Youth Aliyah, at least at the outset prior to the outbreak of WWII. And perhaps the long view of orphan work in the Yishuv would lend itself to different analyses of the Holocaust orphan in Israel.

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